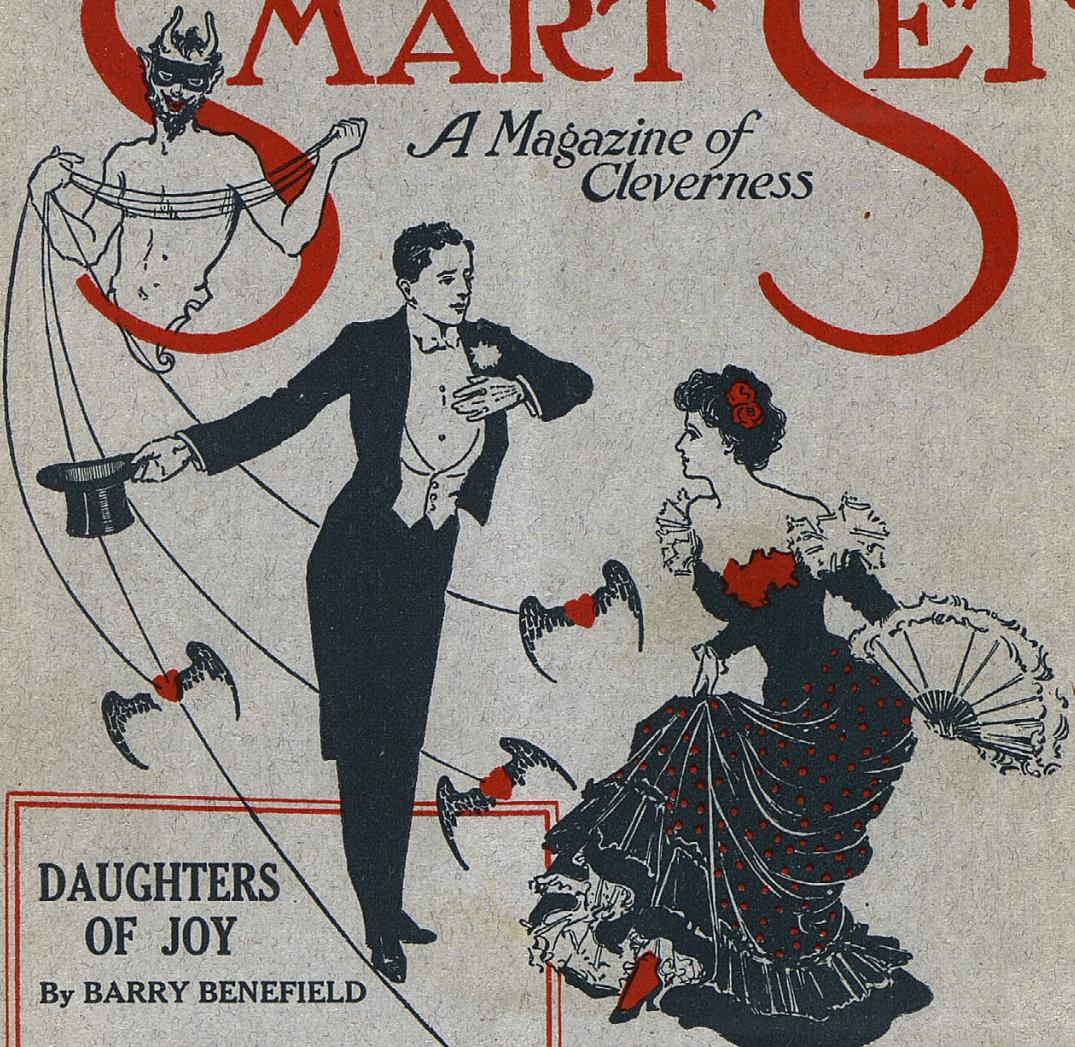


MAY, 1913

25 Cents

The Smart Set

A Magazine of Cleverness



DAUGHTERS OF JOY

By BARRY BENEFIELD

THE SQUAB

By GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

THE CHALK LINE

A NOVELETTE

By the Author of
"MASTERING FLAME"



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FIFTH AVENUE & 37TH STREET
NEW YORK

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

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The June SMART SET—Rejuvenated

THE June number of THE SMART SET will be one of the best this magazine has ever issued. The matter will be diverse, and yet *not one item* will appear in this issue which will not prove worthy of the intelligent reader's attention.

One of the most important features of the June number will be a one-act play by Frank Wedekind, called "The Heart of a Tenor" ("Kammersänger"). James Huneker has pronounced the play the best of Wedekind's work, placing it ahead of "The Awakening of Spring," by which this dramatist is best known in America. "The Heart of a Tenor" is a brilliant, semi-serious satire of the amatory trials of a famous opera singer.

The novelette in the June issue will be by Frank Harris, author of "The Bomb," "Montes, the Matador," "The Man Shakespeare," etc. It is entitled, "An English Saint," and deals with a woman's deliberate manufacture of a husband who will serve her ends. Mr. Harris has never done a better piece of work than this. Not only has this novelette a tremendous popular appeal but is, at the same time, one of the finest examples of modern literary art.

"The Feminine Sense of Honor," a short story by Daniel Carson Goodman (who will be remembered as the author of "Unclothed"), is a searching bit of psychological fiction, showing how, in a certain woman, the sense of honor was dissipated by the sexual instinct.

Edna Kenton will contribute a story entitled "Sisters," a bitter and fearless study of the temperaments of two girls who have dared flout the conventions.

"Jerry," by Paul Choiseul, is a powerful study of a modern lynching and the incidents which lead up to it.

The third of George Bronson-Howard's series, "Pages from the Book of Broadway," will deal with "The Front Row Girl." This is the best of Mr. Howard's

stories thus far, and leads us through the entire stage career of a popular showgirl.

A new twist is given to the "triangle" romance in Julian Johnson's "At Seventy." A young and beautiful girl, constantly suspected and accused of infidelity by her husband, is eventually driven into the very sin against which she has successfully fought for many months.

In the June issue, H. L. Mencken will begin a series of satirical sketches called "The American." These articles are to deal with all the phases of the native male product of this country—his religion, his ideas of beauty, his politics, his humor, his habits and his social life. The essays will represent the most solid work that Mr. Mencken has ever done. The fact that they deal with the American dispassionately and satirically will make them at once unique and interesting.

Barry Benefield, whose story, "Daughters of Joy," appears in the present issue of THE SMART SET, will contribute another unusual story to the June number—"Bachelor Embalmerus." This ranks among the strongest and most uncanny—yet withal human—examples of modern short story writing.

Theodore Dreiser's story of night life in London—"Lilly Edwards"—is one of the most vivid sketches this author has ever written. Mr. Dreiser limns the true psychology of a girl of the underworld as few writers have dared attempt.

These are but a few of the many genuine and meritorious things to be found in THE SMART SET for June.

In the field of humor and poetry we believe we have accomplished something new and unusual.

George Jean Nathan's article on the current plays and H. L. Mencken's literary critique will be up to their usual standard; and Owen Hatteras, in his department, "Pertinent and Impertinent," will offer much racy and genuine satire.



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This *Vogue* makes it easy to choose and buy a trousseau—to decorate the church and the home—to buy wedding presents—to remember all the innumerable things that have to be done when a woman of fashion is married.

In the current *Vogue* also begins our important series of papers on good manners. Were it part of a college course, this series would be called Advanced Etiquette. The first paper discusses the early training of the woman of society—she will be expected in after years to carry on the traditions of her family and position.

Be on the watch for the next *Vogue*—a number that tells exactly what to wear in the country. One goes in, nowadays, for extreme simplicity by day and extreme elaborateness by night. In the May 15th *Vogue* you will find a profusion of smart new waists, skirts, hats and tub frocks. Also riding habits, top coats and hats, boots and gloves.

It is strange how few people realize that there is a definite standard for outdoor wear. By reading the next *Vogue*, you will avoid the hybrid half-masculine, half-feminine outing clothes so often offered.

The next *Vogue* also gives plans for a very simple little country home—the kind you can safely lock up and leave from Tuesday to Friday. We will show not only the floor plans of this home, but also a pleasant variety of appropriate furniture, wallpapers and cretonnes. Watch for the next *Vogue*.

Tell your newsdealer now to send you a copy of the May 1st *Vogue*, and surely to reserve for you a copy of the May 15th *Vogue*. These numbers make it easy to solve just those summer problems which are perplexing you most at this moment.

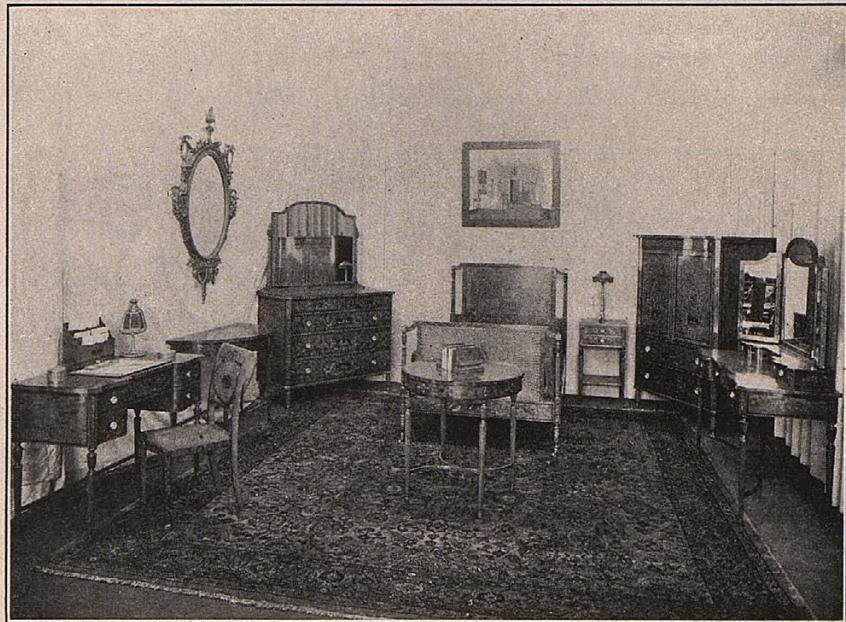
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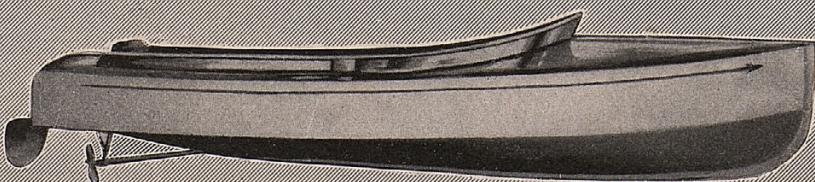
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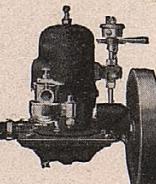
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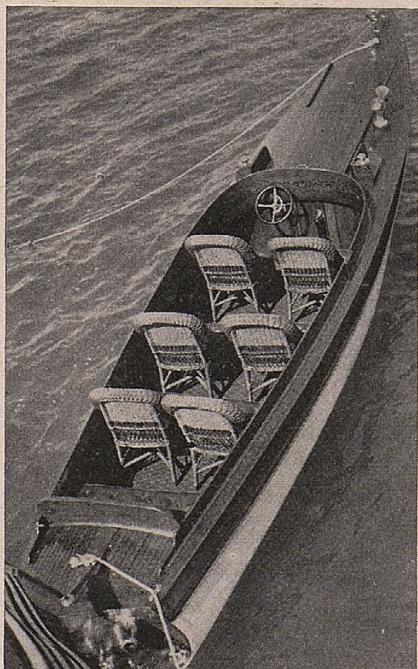
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THE SMART SET

The Magazine For Minds That Are Not Primitive

DAUGHTERS OF JOY

By Barry Benefield

IN the morning of one of those early spring days when the wind has dragged up from the bay and smothered down over the smothering city innumerable blankets of oozy gray fog, a wagon that bore the name of the American Express Company in gilt letters on its dark blue sides drew up in front of an old-style, four-story, brownstone-front house in West Twenty-eighth Street, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Four men lifted out a black coffin, with mockingly bright imitation silver mountings all over it, and carried it up the high front stoop in the strangely mixed manner of slow and gentle pall-bearers and quick and destructive express handlers. The door was opened, the coffin went in.

The four men set their burden on two undertaker's stools that had already been placed in the long front parlor on the first floor, and Madam Margarett was signing her real, her unprofessional name in the expressman's book—Margaret Schwartz. The six young women stood reading the bright plate on top of the coffin, which said that the remains of Lucy Painter lay therein. They scrutinized the inscription as if it were stubbornly withholding from them some information that they ought to possess.

The four men went out as the agile little Italian undertaker, with the bristly

mustache, from around in Seventh Avenue, rushed in. Unscrewing the board that protected the glass over the corpse's face, he lifted it off with a delicate flourish and stood back, silent, intense, immensely satisfied with his gesture.

The Madam came in and lighted all four of the gas jets in the chandelier—for these houses in this sinister neighborhood kept their front window shades always pulled down, for the sake of the police—and the seven women crowded around the coffin to look at the white, thin face, still and calm, with its final sweet expression of perfect neutrality that gave no shadowed hint of what experiences had passed over the dead woman in her thirty-two years on earth. The rich blue-black hair emphasized the stillness of the face.

The low-voiced comments of women at such times are always the same; we will not listen to the Boss and her six girls. After a while the Madam said: "We'll go up to her old room. We've got a job ahead of us this week, I'll tell you. You don't know all about it yet."

The ponderous woman labored puffingly up one flight of stairs and entered the rear room on the second floor, followed by the six young women in single file. She seated herself in a rocking chair in front of the white marble mantelpiece—which hinted at nobler days in

the history of this house—and the six satellites disposed themselves on the bed and the lounge and the floor.

"Yes, we *have* got a job ahead of us," the Boss went on, drawing an envelope from some unseen pocket of the baby-blue kimono enwrapped about her soft, fat-padded person. "Luce wrote this a month ago from the sanitarium up there in the Adirondacks. You've heard part of it; now hear all. Let's see now. Um, 'Dear Mag,' she says here—don't none of you ever try to call me Mag; she was in this house ten years, that's the reason she could do it."

"We should be glad if you would read the letter, Madam," interrupted Sadie, the black-haired Belgian Jewess, who sat on the foot of the bed.

"Yes, go on," said Lil, the thin, hectic girl whom they sometimes called Texas Lil.

"Well, now let's see," continued the Boss, running one pudgy hand over her sallow face and back over her sparse, light-colored hair. "'I saw at first that there was no hope for me,' Luce says here. 'I saw it in the open face of the day head nurse, an Irishwoman. I guess I waited too long, Mag, to get out of the city. Lungs must be attended to right off if you are going to save them, and I have waited two years; but I did not know it at first.'

"Anyway, I am taking all the milk and eggs I can swallow, though that is not much here lately. All day I sit on a long gallery, bundled up in heavy clothes, like forty others in the row, and look down into the black valley where there is not a single green and glad thing that I can see yet, and wondering, Mag, what about when I die. Like a fool, I told them when I came up here the name and address of my mother down in Louisiana; and when they asked me who was my nearest friend, Mag, I told them you was."

"I am afraid they will send the body—I call it body, though God knows, Mag, there is not much left of the plump body of ten years ago—down to my mother, who will have it buried out in Oakwood Cemetery, in a space I have seen, between my little sister and my

father. I ought not to be there, Mag, the likes of me."

"And still my mother would never rest unless there was a regular funeral and she was at it. So I am going to tell them here to ship the body to you when the cat is dead. I will send you all the money I have, which is six hundred dollars, and you wire her three hundred dollars and tell her to come to the funeral; and say that I so loved the city that had treated me so well that I could not bear to be buried anywhere else in the world."

"Good God!" breathed little Olga, whom they called the Anarchist, because she came from Russia and because she gave the impression, somehow, of a black bomb that might explode at any moment. She threw herself back against the wall behind the sofa on which she sat, bumping her head with a thud. The Boss looked at her severely, continuing with Luce's letter:

"Lay the body in Greenwood Cemetery—that is nearly like Oakwood, anyway—only have a regular funeral; but fix the undertaker, fix the preacher, fix everybody. Do not let her suspect what I was. Get a Methodist preacher if you can. It will be awful tough on you and the girls, this acting business, but it will be over in three or four days. You will do it, won't you, Mag?"

"Let me give you a tip. I always pretended when I was at home in the summers that my fine clothes and things I had made as a stenographer; you know people away from New York believe anything about the money that can be made there. She thought I got fifty dollars a week. I did leave home to go to a business college, but I was making seven dollars a week when—never mind that now, though. You are running a boarding house, see? And Sadie, Lil, My Lady, Olga and the others are working girls. They will help me out, I know."

"I'm going to be a bookkeeper," broke in she whom they called My Lady, a title springing from the truly magnificent diamonds that glittered ever in her ears.

"Are you through?" asked the

Madam, looking fiercely at the pale, sedate, old-faced girl, who sat on the lounge by Rose.

"Quite, thank you." My Lady strove constantly to live up to the diamonds and the title. She studied Ouida for fine manners.

"Then I'll go on. 'Do you remember, Mag,' Luce says here, 'when you were a little girl and swung in the parks or in the woods how, when they would stop pushing the swing it would get slower and slower until finally it came to a dead stop by itself? We called that letting the cat die. Well, Mag, the cat is dying now. I will wire you when the cat is almost dead, and I will tell the sanitarium people here to wire you when it is all dead. Then do some acting, Mag—do some strong acting.'

"Maybe I shall not feel strong enough to write again. Read this to the girls when the body arrives. And now let me thank—"

The big woman's hands fell into her lap, her eyes gazing out through the rear window at the oozy, gray fog that lay over the little boxed backyards. The moisture congealing on the tin roof dripped down the tin gutter by the window, its pulsing monotone joined by others, grading downward in faintness, from other tin roofs at the back of other old-style, four-story, brownstone-front houses. The hoarse, moaning whistles of the fog-bound vessels in the harbor came to the ears of the seven women as they sat there still.

"Pore Luce!" whispered the Boss, brushing at her whitish gray eyes with her left hand, and then, clearing her voice, as if she were ministering to a sore throat merely, went on louder and more distinctly:

"Me a boarding house landlady and you working girls! 'Have a regular funeral,' she says. 'Don't let her suspect what I was.' Whew!"

"I'll be a stenographer, just like Luce was," announced the irresponsible, snub-nosed Kittie, who lolled on the floor.

"I'm a librarian, who gives out books to read," ventured the timid, diffident, blonde Alice, who sat upright at the head of the bed.

"Be what you please," broke in the Boss briskly. "I must be stirring. But tell me tonight what you have decided that you are; we mustn't get mixed up. This is Monday. I have wired the old lady; she'll be here early Wednesday morning, according to her answer."

The six girls went down to the front parlor to watch the little undertaker ostentatiously piddling through his ornate futilities. The Madam strode into the front room on the second floor.

After a while she came out, wearing all her furs, though the weather was stifling; wearing all her jewelry, though the fog would hide it. She walked around to the Tenderloin police station in West Thirtieth Street, had a talk with the Captain in his private office, and when she returned home after a very busy trip around the city found a uniformed policeman pacing back and forth in front of her stoop. From various curtain-shaded front windows in the street furtive eyes had noted, with the malice of satisfied envy, the appearance of the policeman, and voices over the telephone said exultantly: "Well, Mag is in bad in Thirtieth Street at last." One or two remarked: "I can't make it out at all; a coffin went in there this morning." But Mag spoke genially to the policeman as she went in.

That night the six girls were again gathered in Luce's room. "If anybody makes a break while the old lady is here," went on the Boss, smoothing out the blue kimono over her right knee, "they'll get their blocks knocked off by me. Sadie, don't *you* get lit. My Lady, cut out the dope until the old lady goes home; if you got to have it, take it at night. Wear them diamonds if you must, but I'd take the things off this week if I were you, for this week, anyhow. Hide them dirty novels of yours, Alice; and, Olga, for God's sake, try to hold your temper. Be sweet, Kittie; you know how. And you have, too, Lil.

"That cop you see out there is to keep anybody out of here. He'll be there until the old lady leaves. Now I got to go down and give that nigger cook a lesson or two. The undertaker

will be easy, because nobody will understand what him and his ginneys are saying. But the preacher scares me. To get him I went way up to the Bronx, as far away from here as possible; but we all got to watch him like a stool pigeon. Get him away quick when it's over, see? Don't let him have five words with Luce's mother, and listen to all he does say; if he sees anything and begins to talk dangerous, butt in and switch him. Gee, but there's going to be some acting around here this week."

So the preparations went ahead. There were many pictures and other decorations that had to be hidden; the Boss went through the house three or four times to see if anything visible and damning still lurked in any of the rooms.

Early Wednesday morning the door bell rang. The Madam, fully dressed, went down and opened it herself. A small woman in black stepped quickly inside—except for her gray hair, an aged and faded and wholesomely wrinkled image of Luce; tense, electric, her darting gray eyes summarizing her.

"We can't fool *her*," groaned the Boss in her heart.

"Where is she?" Mrs. Painter asked in one of those instantaneous voices; and, seeing the coffin through the door, she ran to it, laid her head on it and moaned over and over again, "Oh, my baby! Oh, my baby!" patting at the black wood with her hands.

The big woman walked out of the door and down toward the back of the hall so as to leave Luce and her mother alone for a few minutes. Hearing a fluttering, she looked up in time to see the six coming down the stairs. She waved them back, making frightful faces at them; they retreated in silent panic to the Boss's room on the second floor. "This is a job," breathed the Madam, wringing her heavy hands.

"And so this is Mrs. Schwartz!" she presently heard a thrilling voice say behind her, and turned upon the tearful but businesslike little woman. "I know I shall never be able to thank you enough," went on Mrs. Painter. "Lucy wrote me how kind you were to her

while she was here; and that was a very long time, as I remember."

But in her eyes were latent questions that filled the Boss with dread.

"Not at all, Mis' Painter," she answered, feeling that she was talking exactly as she felt—like a fool. "Though you haven't told me, I know you are Luce's—Miss Painter's—mother. You see, she was with me so long that I got to using that familiar name; she preferred it, she often told me. Would you like to meet the other girls in the boarding house that your daughter knew? None of them will go to work until after the funeral is over."

"That is very good of them," commented Luce's mother. "I should like very much to meet them."

"This was her room," remarked the Madam as they entered Luce's old room on the second floor, the big woman suddenly conscious of a feeling that it was horrible to conduct the mother in there; but it was too late to draw back: that should have been thought of the day before.

"Most of her things are packed in that trunk," she ventured. Mrs. Painter went slowly about the room, touching tenderly the white marble mantelpiece, two artificial roses in a glass vase that sat in the middle of it, a comb and brush—anything that Lucy herself might have looked at often and touched and loved. She sat down on the bed, folding her hands with an air of strong resignation.

"I'll bring in the girls," said the Madam quickly, her mind dimly and painfully conscious of other uses of that statement. The supporting cast came in and were duly introduced to Luce's mother in their selected roles of stenographer, librarian, and so on; after which they disposed themselves nervously about the room, waiting. The Boss insisted vainly that Mrs. Painter leave the bed and sit in the rocking chair, sinking into it herself after a while. Luce's mother cleared her throat and the big woman quaked.

"I wish, Mrs. Schwartz, that I had been notified about Lucy while she was alive. Couldn't that have been done?"

Do you know what it is to a mother to be away from the bedside of a dying child? But it is ungrateful of me to seem to censure: most likely a message was sent to me and was not delivered. Wasn't that the way?"

Luce's mother was not melting in tears; only her voice, in spite of her startling control of it, sounded, in tremendous overtones, the sorrow that was in her.

The Madam rocked her chair back and forth three or four times while she considered whether to charge anything against the telegraph company. "No," she said, slowly patting the arms of the chair, "that was not the way of it. No message was sent. You see, the end was very sudden. Luce always said not to worry you uselessly, because she had felt a good many times that all was over when it wasn't. And then, of a sudden, the end came. I wasn't notified until it was all over with her, though I was only a hundred or so miles away from the sanitarium. That was when I first wired you."

The door bell rang, and the Boss, now having an excuse, fled down the stairs, though she knew that the negro cook was on her way to answer it, and that it was only the undertaker's assistant anyway. She hoped the girls would act their parts, for a little resting space, without her guiding presence; but she was very nervous about them. "My Lady puts on so," she said to herself, "and Olga might explode some of her cranky notions. Kittie talks a whole lot and don't think none at all. Thank heaven, Sadie ain't been near a ginmill back parlor. Well, the funeral will be over by noon tomorrow. Here's hoping the old lady don't tarry long."

In the afternoon, for the sake of two or three hours of certain safety, the Boss called a cab and insisted on Mrs. Painter going out with her.

"You got to get some air," she explained. "Then you'll want to see the city that Luce—Miss Lucy, I mean—loved so well. Lordy, how she did love it; that was the reason, you know, as I told you, that she couldn't bear to be buried anywhere else in the world."

And so the day got through to a satisfactory close; nothing untoward had happened, so far as the Madam knew. At dinner, she had thought, the family had conducted themselves with credit. The six working girls retired to the upstairs regions, five of them carrying secret instructions to watch lest Sadie get out of the house. The Madam and Luce's mother sat in the dimly lighted parlor, near the coffin, in silence.

The street outside was unusually quiet, for it. The Boss could hear the policeman's heels striking on the cement sidewalk as he paced up and down in front of the stoop. Three or four of the dingy children whose parents still permitted themselves to live in this neighborhood in spite of its changing character were playing one-eyed cat. Now and then one of them screamed a hoarse and strident adult malediction across the street at a companion, which Mag hoped Luce's mother did not hear. A street piano played the undying and unaging "Lucia" sextette, and, receiving no silver or nickel or copper encouragement, moved out of the street, westward across Seventh Avenue. But the Madam, straining at the sounds at this comparatively quiet time, did not find anything in them to frighten her.

About nine o'clock, however, she heard, coming nearer and nearer, an unmistakable band of young college cut-ups who had begun the night early. They were drunk enough to make much noise, sober enough to escape arrest. They were going from place to place, remaining in each anywhere from ten minutes to an hour, according to the warmth of their reception and their first impression of the house they happened to be in. The Boss knew the tactics of these bands, and she hoped the sight of the policeman would at once make an unpleasant impression, so that they would pass her place by without attempting an entrance. Tipping to the front windows, she closed them all the way down, opening one in the rear of the parlor for air. Now the dimmed voices of the singers were swallowed up in a house across the street. The Madam put the roisterers out of the forward

part of her mind, but away back in her head she kept saying, "I hope old Frenchy keeps 'em until they get ready to go home," though she seldom wished anything but ill luck to old Frenchy.

She glanced furtively at Luce's mother in the endeavor to find out if she had been listening to and trying to interpret any of the street sounds; and she was satisfied: Luce's mother appeared not to have heard anything.

The commanding little gray woman said she would sit by the body until midnight, and the Madam went quietly out into the hall, meaning to stand guard in hiding near the bottom of the basement stairs, where she could hear almost everything that went on in the house. Looking down, she saw, already on the lowest step, the leader of the band of roisterers, followed by ten or twelve others; she recognized their kind instantly. They had slipped in through the basement door, intending a surprise for the house. The Boss could distinguish their self-satisfied grins, could see them rocking in delightful unstable equilibrium.

The big woman threw both hands over her mouth to force back the screaming curses that mobbed her lips. Her seething mind coined curses and laid them upon the name and family of the policeman, who had probably stepped around the corner for a drink. She barely breathed old familiar curses upon the cook, who had left unlocked the iron-grated basement gate and door.

But what to do? The bold-faced, brown-haired boy, with a nose like a Greek god, was coming up the stairs. She heard Luce's mother in the dimly lighted parlor behind her softly sobbing. Argument with half-intoxicated and spirited youths was out of the question, she knew; ejectment, even if she could accomplish it, would make even more noise.

Madam Margaretta never lacked resourcefulness, nor wanted a decision long. Gently she tipped down the stairs, holding two fingers on her lips, whispering, "S-sh!" The invaders looked questioningly at one another; then they smiled, thinking that the

Madam had entered into the spirit of the palpable surprise party and would assist them. Taking hold of the manifest captain's hand, the Boss led him up the stairs, led him forward to the edge of the parlor door, and held him from behind, whispering, "Peep in." He peered around the door jamb and saw, in the quiet semi-gloom, a little gray-haired woman crying softly over a black coffin. Gasping a quick breath, he fell back, piloted by the Madam to the head of the stairs, down which he went with his head hanging. One by one the others, feeling strangely guilty before they had looked in, peered around the door jamb and followed silently their leader down the stairs and out of the house.

The Boss walked behind them until they had reached the sidewalk and watched them until they had turned the corner into Sixth Avenue. Then she hunted up the policeman and gave him a piece of her mind, which was not pleasant just then; after which she waked up the cook and gave her also a piece, withholding her heavy hand only because of Luce's sacred secret. Going quietly back to the parlor, she found Mrs. Painter sitting in a chair near the head of the coffin.

"Who were those young men?" she asked.

"Those young men?" repeated the Boss. "Did you hear them?"

"Oh, yes. I only felt them at first. They might have come on in if they knew Lucy and she liked them."

"Oh, they *were* friends of Miss Lucy's. They did mean to come in, but they saw you here and they thought that maybe they would disturb you. They are so timid, those young fellows; they're only boys, anyhow."

"I am sorry," said Luce's mother, leaning her head wearily against the coffin; she had not shown any weariness before this. The Boss looked at her apprehensively, concluding, after a while, however, that Luce's secret was still out of danger.

At midnight Lil and My Lady relieved the watchers. The Madam saw Mrs. Painter securely in bed on the

fourth floor, and then fell into her own bed, praying, as nearly as the Boss ever prayed, that the next day would not bring more attacks upon Luce's secret than she could repulse.

With the coming in of Thursday New York threw off the thick and oozy gray blankets of fog that it had been suffering under since Monday, and the wind blew up from the bay a breeze that was bracingly chill and salty. The Boss was up early with her family, superintending their toilettes. My Lady was induced, for twelve hours only, to lay aside her diamond earrings. The Madam herself gave notice that, though she would wear her furs, she had put aside all her jewelry until the funeral was over. After breakfast, having assembled the family in Luce's room for final instructions, she said only this: "Watch that preacher."

He came presently, a young, clean-shaven, preternaturally solemn, lean man, his personality proclaiming initiative and cheerful briskness as one of his consciously assumed duties on such sad occasions as this.

"Are many of the close relatives here?" he asked, rubbing his hands together with tremendous energy and no noise. He and the Boss took chairs just inside the parlor door.

"The mother," replied the Madam. "Over there, the little woman in black."

"She the only one?"

"Yes. She's from out of town. Down in Louisiana. No others of the family living."

"And those young ladies?"

"Just boarders of mine—stenographers, bookkeepers, all working girls, friends of Miss Lucy's. Miss Lucy herself was—"

"Ah, yes, I understand," the minister interrupted, raising his right hand in mild depreciation of his inquisitiveness. "We may as well begin, don't you think? It is nearly ten o'clock."

"Yes, might as well," replied the Boss, suppressing the joyful note in her voice with desperate strength.

After low-toned introductions to Luce's mother and the girls, the young preacher took his stand at the head of the coffin and made a few general re-

marks about people coming up like flowers and being cut down—"like weeds," whispered Olga to Lil. The words he had to utter were soon uttered; the service at the house was concluded. It had all sounded strange and foreign to the Boss, in that parlor. Now and then she looked hard at the six young mourners, soberly clad in black; in her mind's eye she could see them in their customary gorgeous and brief attire.

Now the small Italian undertaker picked up the board that was to shut in the face of Luce forever. He held it poised, suggestively. Taking the hint, the Madam and her six walked around the head of the coffin and gazed finally upon her they had known as Luce; the mother bent down and kissed finally the brow of her she had always called Little Lucy. The undertaker laid on the board; he and an assistant set to work busily with the highly ornamented screws. The crunching of these eating into the wood was cruelly suggestive. The mother broke into her first hysterical sobbing. The girls could not restrain themselves; they did not try to. The Boss tried hard and failed.

She heard some shuffling of feet and heavy breathing, which she interpreted to mean that the undertaker's assistants were carrying the coffin to the hearse out in front of the stoop. After a while, when she did look up, the young preacher had Luce's mother by the arm and was conducting her to a carriage, speaking very earnestly. The Madam, mopping desperately at her eyes, rushed after the couple and got in just before the door closed, thus forgetting her furs.

All the way out to the cemetery the minister talked vehemently to Luce's mother about the temptations of a great city. The big woman yearned to press both her thick hands over his mouth and yell into his right ear, "Shut up." Mrs. Painter looked strainingly out of a window, answering only yes and no; so the Boss let him talk on.

When the coffin had at last been lowered into the ground, and that shattering moment of falling clods upon the hollow-sounding casing had passed, the Madam sent the minister back to the

city in a carriage by himself, breathing a deep, glad sigh of relief when it had rolled away. Once now she had seen Luce's mother off to the railway station, she would lie across a bed and scream for the joy of relaxed nerves; moreover, she would order up champagne, in which the dead would be mourned in a proper manner. Yet Mag was glad she had done her best to carry out Luce's last wishes.

The tension of the two days was somewhat relieved at the dinner table. There was a little low-toned laughter. But in the situation there was still danger. Kittie had to be ruthlessly suppressed with a surreptitious blunderbuss look. Once or twice Olga seemed to be about to explode and erupt wrath over preachers, churches, the present economic system and respectable society. Sadie ate meagerly and was morose—a bad sign for Sadie.

After dinner the girls scattered through the house. The Madam and Mrs. Painter went to Luce's room. The two trunks had been packed and sent away, the railway and Pullman tickets had been bought, and a taxicab ordered for eleven o'clock to catch the midnight train out of the Grand Central Station. The Boss could hardly contain her joy over the imminent lifting of the crushingly heavy burden of respectable acting, not to speak of watching over the six less expert actors who relied on her for guidance.

She kept glancing furtively at the clock on the white mantelpiece. She and the little wrinkle-faced, electric woman talked easily about all sorts of things, each trying to lead the other's thoughts out of the house and away from its recent sad associations; the hands of the clock were moving upon ten, but slowly. The Boss remarked to herself that Luce's mother was "all right"; that was to be expected, being Luce's mother. How lightning-quick she was! How full of gumption! In different circumstances, the Madam would have wished for an extended visit. The clock hands dragged around to ten thirty; now they were on the home stretch. The Boss was sitting comfort-

ably far back in the rocking chair, her hands folded complacently in her lap.

Suddenly, from down in the front hall, came sounds of a commotion. Mag sat up straight in her chair, her right hand pressed against her cheek, a gesture meaning that she was disturbed and thinking hard and fast. The sounds were familiar to her; they snatched her back from the great content into which she had been slipping. It was Sadie; she had been outside. The watch over her should have been kept up; but it was too late now to think about what should have been done.

"Please keep your seat, Mis' Painter," Mag said, smiling in sweetly patient forbearance. "The cook is grumbling again about something, I suppose; she is always grumbling. I'll have to discharge her, I guess, but I hate to do it, because she would have a tough time getting another job, on account of her manners."

Sadie, however, while the Boss was preparing for an exit, had been rushing up the stairs, and now she burst into the room before Mag could move her ponderous figure through the door, falling on her knees in front of Mrs. Painter and laying her black, crinkly-haired head in the little woman's lap.

"I am so sorry," she sobbed. "I am mad at God that he should take away Luce. She was the best of the lot, and this here house ain't worth living in no more."

The big woman, her face writhing in frightened wrath, took two steps toward the kneeling Sadie, her huge hands extended to snatch her to her feet. Luce's mother held up her right hand in protection; the Madam stopped still, wailing in despair.

"Luce was the oldest," went on Sadie, who had not raised her head, "but she was the swellest dame in this here house. All the men said so. And she made things sing around this place, Luce did. We been thinking you must have been like her when you were a girl. Was your hair that funny black like hers?"

Sadie broke into hysterical sobbing. The little woman smoothed her hair gently, saying nothing, her eyes closed

in apparent pain, soothing the girl into quietness by touch alone.

"If you would kiss me, Luce's mother, I would go to bed," Sadie declared, raising her face, smiling radiantly in the bewildering illogicality of intoxication. Luce's mother having kissed her, she rose and walked out of the room with exaggerated stiffness and steadiness, being received just beyond the door by Lil and My Lady, who seized hold of her arms and conducted her upstairs.

The Madam had dropped into her chair after following the girl to the door. She now watched the clock with bold desperation. There were ten more minutes, if the taxicab came according to her time; a few more minutes, anyway. How could she get through them? Like a guilty dog, she kept running her eyes over and around Luce's mother, never looking directly at her. The weather was warm, she said. She supposed spring had come long ago in Louisiana, it being so far south. A taxicab snorted in the street—and then went on.

"I'll be putting on my hat and things," stated Mrs. Painter, getting briskly to her feet; and the Boss could have hugged her. She rose and stood apprehensively by Luce's mother.

"Mrs. Schwartz," said the little woman in that distressingly clear voice of hers.

"Yes?"

"Don't you be rough with Sadie when I'm gone. She didn't tell me anything; I knew what this house was thirty minutes after I had entered it. Lucy's father took me out of one, in New Orleans, thirty-five years ago."

Mrs. Painter ran a long pin through the hat she wore. The Boss's hands fell by her side, her round, whitish eyes starting out, the breath blasting out of her cavernous chest.

"But I didn't know about Lucy until I came up here," went on the little woman in a low voice. "I believed her stenography story. I knew she had been a stenographer for a while; I reckoned she was still one. I didn't press her to stay at home; things weren't ever very pleasant there while her father was alive, and when he was dead she was already weaned away."

"And though, as I say, Mrs. Schwartz, I knew about the house, yet I didn't want to let on that I knew anything, on account of you and the girls; you all have acted so fine. It didn't seem like it was fair to hurt you by letting on I knew. But now I am afraid for Sadie, and so I speak. She didn't tell me anything; and so you will be easy with her, won't you?"

"Yes, I will."

A taxicab was coughing and snorting at the door. The bell rang.

"I have told everybody except you good-bye, haven't I?" asked Mrs. Painter, putting on her coat.

"Yes."

"And thanked everybody as well as I could, though I couldn't ever do it enough, especially you."

"We was all glad to do what we could, Mis' Painter."

"Lean over, Mag, and let me kiss you. I'm so little."

Then they went downstairs. Luce's mother entered the taxicab, and Mag stood on the high stoop dazedly watching the chauffeur fuss around the front end of his machine. Of a sudden the Boss, crying out, "Wait a minute," ran down the steps as fast as she could. Opening the door, she stuck her head into the darkness inside.

"Tell me, Mis' Painter," she said in a hard voice, "did that preacher know, too?"

"Yes."

"And you wouldn't have said anything if Sadie hadn't come in like she did?"

"Why, no, Mag."

"Well, good-bye, Mis' Painter."

"Good-bye, Mag."

The taxicab snorted away. The Boss stood on the stoop and followed the red tail light until it had flirted maliciously around the corner of Sixth Avenue, where it had seemed to wink at her in evil glee. With unhurried but terrible deliberation, Mag, nearest friend of Luce, marched back inside the house, unscrewed the wooden handle out of the feather duster, and, going upstairs, beat Sadie sober. Then she ordered up champagne for seven.

SYRINX

By Bliss Carman

I AM Syrinx, soul of the reed;
In me the music of earth is freed.

The immortal cadence all men know
Lurks at my lips; but a god must blow.

Since first I was found and wooed by Pan,
I have taught the rhythm of life to man.

In the flush of dawn when the meadows gleam,
I flute for joy by the wandering stream,

Till the thrushes open their golden throats
To echo the call of my reedy notes.

The grass heads bend and the branches sway,
And the traveler lingers beside the way,

As I tune my lilt with the dying fall,
And the field lark answers my eerie call.

When only the dry cicada sings,
And the sultry locust claps his wings,

In the languorous heat I drowse and swoon
At the burning touch of the dreaming noon,

Or swing with the sailing wind and sigh
For the pageant of summer passing by.

When the full moon rises frail and large,
And shadows steal from the wooded marge,

In many a valley I answer the drone
Of little rivers lost and lone,

Till my head is bowed and I rock with them
Under the twilight's purple hem,

Where all tunes out of the ancient heart—
Sadness and longing and love—are part

Of the infinite music made for man
By a breath of life and the flute of Pan.

THE CHALK LINE

By the Author of "Mastering Flame"

"CONFOUND the boy!" muttered Pembroke, kicking a chair out of the way, as he stalked the length of the living room. "Might know he'd take this very time to get himself ill—looks rotten seedy, too. Well, just my beastly luck; train one servant to fill the place of five—and keep a devilish quieter tongue about it—and pouf! Off he goes limping to bed, just when I need him most.

"No"—Pembroke halted abruptly, brought his lips together with peculiar tenseness—"I wouldn't have anyone but Ping here tonight for every shilling I have on earth."

And he left off fuming, and began to arrange the room; carefully, bit by bit; standing off to squint fastidiously through his brilliant blue eyes at each detail—and whistling softly.

It was a charming room, with its purple hangings and long windows open onto the broad veranda; its tea table, piano—littered with sheet music and the scores of operas—its couch luxurious with down-filled cushions, its quaint teak settle in one corner. People in Shanghai were rather proud of this room of Pembroke's—of his whole bungalow, in fact: they said it showed what a bachelor could do. The traditional bachelor in the East doing, of course, nothing. Pembroke was a dazzling and adored exception.

He knocked a pillow into place, straightened a picture, and said finally: "H'm—it'll do, even for her." And then, with a quick glance through a half-open door toward a room beyond, he suddenly threw his arms up over his head and murmured exultantly, "Ah, Harry—Harry! I—"

Footsteps were flying up the drive. He turned swiftly. And through the open window, from the veranda, came a woman—exquisite, breathless.

"Louis," she began rapidly, "Louis, I've come! I found—he telephoned from the club that he'd not be back until just time to catch the boat—I couldn't bear to wait until the hour we'd set, so I left word I'd gone to Betty's, and would meet him at the steamer. Louis—Louis! I'm here! I've come!"

He caught her to him, crushed her, kissed her madly. "I—can't seem to say anything," he managed unsteadily, after a while. "It's too marvelously unbelievable, having you here. And your things?"

"They've gone. I gave them to the Astor House porter, who's to take them to the dock—but it's the wrong dock, of course. Tomorrow we'll send for them. Ah, Louis!" She moved free of his arms, and stood gazing about her, tremulously, radiant. "We're together, alone—it's really true! At last I'm going to be happy!"

A step crunched on the gravel outside. "Go into that other room, darling," Pembroke said swiftly. "Until after tonight you know"—with a reassuring smile—"it's best to be careful."

She gathered up her gloves and vanished.

A moment later a man came onto the veranda. "Oh! Oh, hello, Brent," called Pembroke, going to the door. "Glad to see you—come in."

"Thanks," said Brent, entering. "All alone?"

"Why—yes." The other man laughed naturally. "Generally am, you know, except for Ping—and today the wretched

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boy's ill. Had to turn in an hour ago. But sit down—we'll have something wet."

"H'm," said John Brent—"I came for something lamentably dry." But he sat down.

"Oh, well," returned Louis pleasantly, "the afternoon's young—I dare say we've time for both. Have a cigarette, while I dig out the ice." And he pushed a silver box toward Brent, on his way from the room.

Brent looked after him. Unmitigated pleasure it was to regard the splendid clean shoulders, set so finely on the tall body. Brent himself was only of average height, but his keen, bold-cut features, under thick black hair, were striking enough. By profession he was a physician.

When Louis came back, "Look here," he said, "don't you want me to have a look at that boy of yours? I might just as well—tell you if there's anything seriously wrong."

"Thanks—awfully good of you, but I've already sent for Sanders; the natives have him, you know. I won't bother you—dare say Sanders'll be along soon. That right for you, Doctor?" Pembroke held forth a brimming iced glass, crowned with fragrant mint.

"Perfect." Brent took one sip; then, folding his brown right hand into a fist, he said: "Come, Pembroke, cards down on the table! I know everything, so—"

"Dear, dear!" murmured Pembroke, rummaging in a cellaret. "What everything?"

"No good finessing," retorted the other impatiently. "I tell you I know. Hilary Comer is coming here to you tonight, when her husband sails for Manila. Is it true?"

"But if you know," said Pembroke, with an undisturbed smile, "why ask me? My dear Brent, I should have thought that in two years you'd have learned the vulture of Shanghai gossip—if that's all that's worrying you."

"As far as I know," Brent said quietly, "there's been no gossip—at least, not this, thank God. I got my information direct from you and Hilary, and I tell

you I know everything. I've come here to—"

"My dear Doctor," interrupted Pembroke, possessing himself of a chair, "supposing your extraordinary hypothesis to be true, I should think this quite the last place you would have come."

"Possibly. You don't know preceding circumstances. Let me sketch them for you."

The two men were now sitting opposite each other, Louis smoking negligently, and with his glass convenient on the broad chair arm at his side; Brent erect, leaning forward, his probing eyes intent on the other's face.

"When I was a student in Vienna," he began rapidly, "I met Hilary Temple. She was in the second year of her work with Leschetizky, already his prize virtuoso. At the end of six months—we were in the same *pension*—we decided to take a flat together."

Pembroke tore to his feet with an exclamation. "You—you—"

"Sit down," said the doctor quietly. "I never had faith in marriage—never wanted to get married. Neither, she said, did she. Between us, we found we had money enough to run a home on that basis." Louis now was sitting perfectly still. Where his hands clutched the chair arms, the knuckles showed white.

"We never did it," Brent concluded, in his same level tones. "She went to London to give her first concert; and when she came back—we were to move into the flat next day—she told me she was going to marry Comer."

"A-ah!" breathed Louis.

"Yes. But the point is this: after giving various and vague reasons for the revolution in her state of mind, she unconsciously came down to the real one. She said: 'When I thought of it'—that was, of living with me—it seemed all right, but when it came to *doing* it, I *couldn't*.' Pembroke, the whole philosophy of the woman who wants to be unconventional and can't lies right there."

"Indeed!" said Pembroke drily. He was recovering his poise by comforting bounds.

"Yes. Hilary wants to think—and to act—for herself; but herself will *act* in only one way."

"Then why," demanded Louis coolly, "is she coming here to me tonight, as you say?"

"Because you've kept her impulse to the sticking point, and because she trusts you, and is very much bored with her husband. She'll not stay with you two weeks; and then—Pembroke, this must be prevented. *I intend to see that it's prevented!*"

"Oh, do you?" cried Pembroke, losing his temper then, and with it his caution. "And who are you in all this, eh? Hilary's never even mentioned your name to me. What's your game? Coming and preaching to me, when you've done what you jolly well pleased yourself—or tried to! Do you think I wouldn't marry Hilary this minute if I could? I'm not trying to get something for nothing. I'm not asking a woman whom I'm perfectly free to marry, and she to marry me, to be my mistress. Bah! You and your philosophies make me sick. Take 'em where they'll do some good; take 'em to—"

"Hilary's husband, for instance," suggested that individual, appearing within the square of open door. "You should modulate your voices, my friends—I heard you from the end of the drive, where I was tying my horse. Comin' in—may I?"

Louis had turned a shade paler than he was before. "Certainly," he said with an effort. "Er—please come in, Nash."

"I've no revolvers concealed about me," grinned the rather small man in riding clothes, who entered then; "not even a very nasty spite." He stood before the other two men, looking at them as though he quite enjoyed it. "Curiosity's all I bring, and I'll take it away again pretty soon—ship sails at midnight, you know. So be kind to me, boys—tell me all about it."

Brent met the cynical brown eyes with an awakened interest in his own. "How much did you hear?" he asked simply.

Comer swept him with what might have been an approving glance, but

ended in a scowl. "I heard that Louis here," with a wave of the hand, "would marry my wife—when I've divorced her, I suppose; and that you, when you desired her, didn't think it worth the trouble. Was there anything more?"

"Only reasons," said Brent reflectively—"which may not interest you."

"I think, Doctor," said Louis with some ceremony, "that Nash and I can better settle this alone now." From his chair he could see a closed door at the opposite end of the room. He moistened his lips.

"Not at all—not at all," protested Nash Comer, sitting down to cross his short brown legs and pass his hand over his leathery brown face. "Nothing's so much of a crowd as two, ye know—under some circumstances."

"But wait a minute"—through the window he faced, Comer had caught sight of something. "I'm not for shouting my affairs to the rest of Shanghai, like you two. Who's this coming up the drive?"

Louis looked out. "Why, it's Sanders—come to see my servant. Excuse me—I'll show him Ping's digs."

"Seems kind o' glad to stretch his legs, doesn't he?" Comer, watching him hurry away, drawled to Brent. "Damn good to look at," he had to confess laconically.

"But short-sighted. I came," said Brent, "to try to give him the benefit of my experience."

"Then you haven't had much," said Nash Comer, gnawing the ragged mustache that framed his upper lip. "So it was you back there in Vienna," he meditated, staring at Brent dispassionately. "It never occurred to me that *you* were the man."

"She told you, then?"

"Oh, she told me. About you and your 'philosophy,' and—But, Lord, how should I ever have picked you out in Shanghai? She'd not mentioned your name, and—well," he continued curtly, "from the little I've seen of you I should have sized you up for somethin' a bit bigger than a—philosopher."

"Thank you," said Brent.

"Oh, you needn't. I may thank you,

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though, I suppose, for having kept away and minded your own affairs, after she met you again here."

"Oh"—Brent smiled—"I'm not in love with Hilary now, you know."

"Then what are you here for?" shot the other. "Why should you care if—"

"I am a philosopher, you may remember," said Brent calmly; "as such I avert calamity when I can. I am also a physician—a psycho-neurologist; when certain evidence falls into my hands, I use it—to break down hallucination."

"Well, I'm damned!" declared Comer softly. "And the reason is"—watching Brent sharply—"I *believe* you! Would you mind telling me what evidence led you to Pembroke's bungalow this afternoon?"

"I went into the hall at Miss Fayerweather's yesterday to telephone. If you remember the Fayerweather house, there is a little window just above the 'phone that gives onto the veranda. While I waited for my number, I heard Pembroke's voice: 'At ten, then—you can arrange it by saying you've to stop here at Betty's for something, and take another cab. He'll have to go on to attend to the luggage.' And then Hilary's voice—it all happened in two minutes: 'Yes, that'll be best. And you'll be waiting, at your gate?'

"That was all—but quite enough. Their recklessness at least proves their inexperience. Anyone might have heard what I did, and deduced from it that Hilary is intending to come here at ten o'clock this evening, at the time when you go aboard your ship."

"Exactly," said Nash Comer grimly—adding, in a different tone: "You may think I'm here to prevent it; I'm not. It's for Hal to mix the medicine—all I want is what she wants."

"But let me tell you, son"—to Louis returning through the dining room: "I don't do any divorcing, d'you understand? I came here this afternoon to pay a little friendly call; wanted you to know I hadn't been quite that grandmamma tucked up with her knitting that you fondly thought—that I hadn't been growin' cataracts these last weeks, nor investin' in ear trumpets nor—"

Louis flushed red. "I'm sure I never—"

"Oh, yes, you did! But all I want to say to you is this: I know exactly how things stand. I've known all along. And while it's Hal who's dealin' this hand, I'm behind her, d'you see? She can throw the Decalogue under her feet and dance on it—that's her business; but it's mine that when she's snubbed God and man has snubbed her, *I* shall be there for her to come to. Understand?"

Louis was silent.

"And now I'm going," Comer concluded; "my horse'll be gettin' restless, and—I think, gentlemen," with a formality that sat strangely on him, "there is nothing further we need say to each other."

Brent, rising, took the hand extended without constraint. "I wish you weren't going away," he said slowly; "I'd like to know you."

Comer grinned. "That's because I've just been impressive. You'd find me devilish dull when it came to philosophy." He turned to Louis. "Good-bye, son," he said steadily; "you're lettin' yourself in for a big portion of remorse. I think I don't envy you."

"I—good-bye," said Louis darkly, his effort at control weakening at last. "And you, Doctor—you're going, too, I suppose? No, there's nothing more for us to say to each other—every reason why we should never see each other again, I should think. I—"

"Stop!" came an order like a pistol shot—to the two men about to pass out of the door. "No one leaves here. There is cholera in this house. You are in quarantine."

II

HILARY wondered if those men would never go. She divined, from the varying rumble of voices, that there were now two, and that Louis was having trouble in getting rid of them. After tomorrow, Hilary thought gladly, this affair of concealment would be over. Nash would have sailed; people would know that she had stayed behind—with Louis; it would all be perfectly clear and aboveboard.

Then, as she and Louis had told each other, they would see who their real friends were; and the rest, the canting prudes, could go.

That even those who stayed would not approve such simple daring of procedure, they had not overlooked. Even in Shanghai, they could scarcely expect to be approved; for one thing, Nash Comer was, already, quite as well liked as Louis. And when the situation should have exploded into the torpor of Shanghai tea parties—The gleams from Nash's halo would but serve to display blacker and more ugly the enormity of the offending couple. Hilary and Louis saw this quite clearly; they had no philosophy about it—only their love, which they thought was great enough.

As for Hilary's personal attitude toward Nash, the serene selfishness of her was so unconsciously simple as to be sublime. She had wanted to marry Nash, not because she loved him—though his taste for picturesque English, and other attributes of the rough diamond, made no more difference to her than to other people—but because he and his brusque tenderness offered themselves at a time when she was sore and bruised from mere intellect, and yearned for coddling. She had married him. At the end of four years, during which she had roamed a large part of the world with him, in the interests of his tea business, and grown inured to the luxury of unwearying attention, she wanted to leave him—and to go to Louis. She was, apparently, doing it; though she had told Louis, with an adorably distressed smile, that of course it would be "hard on Nash—at first."

When Hilary smiled her eyelashes came together in tantalizing effort to shut out the misty blue beneath; and her nose wrinkled up like a naughty child's. Louis, more occupied with the eyelashes than with Nash (who was rather a good friend of his), had "supposed it would" be hard on him; but added, with the comforting sureness of men's wider knowledge, that he'd get over it, after a while, and then he'd divorce her and they would be married, she and Louis, and everything would be heavenly.

Hilary, wandering down the corridor,

stopped at the living room and listened. They seemed to be rather excited; a pucker came in her white forehead—but, after all, she could tell nothing, the sounds were so muffled. She started to go back and wait, when a slightly open door attracted her idle notice. She pushed it ajar—it was fun to go exploring in Louis's house—and looked in—into a large room, done all in white: dressing table, chairs, curtains, rugs and the big-posted bed, draped within its alcove. The pure peace of it awed Hilary before she realized what the room meant. Then, as she entered hesitatingly, she caught sight of the one bit of color in the place: red roses, a great vase of them on a low tabouret—like a splotch of warm heart's blood upon snow. And she uttered a little cry, and rushed to them, and fell on her knees and kissed their petals.

At that moment Brent outside said: "It's cholera, all right! I put Sanders through a stiff cross-examination, and it seems there's not the shadow of a doubt."

Louis, who had been waiting, speechless, while the two doctors conferred on the veranda, turned on his heel and strode out of the house.

"Kind o' rough on him," said Hilary's husband.

"Rough?" cried Brent. "Do you know, I've two auto-suggestion patients just at the point where they're beginning to dream the right things. And to have to drop them for *days*—I should say it is rough!"

Comer, who was pacing up and down in company with a huge cigar, glanced at him with a peculiar smile. "How long—does this Sanders—count on keeping us penned up here?" he asked, between puffs.

"Doesn't know. Has to see the health officials first. He's all upset because they reported a clean bill of health for the port a week ago—thought the cholera was all cleaned out. Look here"—it occurred to Brent suddenly—"hadn't you better telephone Mrs. Comer?"

"I hadn't—exactly—forgotten it," said Nash drily. "But I thought perhaps Louis—Guess I'll wait a bit," he

concluded in a different voice; adding after a moment irrelevantly: "You're an American, aren't you, Doctor?"

"Yes." Brent had flung himself down in a chair and was gazing curiously at the short, pacing man in his brown riding boots.

"I'm an Australian myself, though I've spent a lot of my life in America, North and South, and knocked about a bit everywhere. I've not seen much of you—just now and then at the club. What'd you come out here for?"

Brent laughed. "To keep out of jail. Ruined myself buying microscopes and ten-dollar books, and engaged as ship's doctor to retrench. By the time I got to Shanghai I'd saved enough money to go on shore, so—here I am."

"Humph! Exactly—*here* you are; and liable to get that wish of yours just now, more thoroughly than you'll care for! I shouldn't wonder, Doctor"—Nash stopped before him, in the thickening twilight, and peered down into his face—"I shouldn't wonder if before we get out of here, you'll know me pretty well. And I you," he finished tersely.

"I hope so," said Brent, looking back at him with quiet steadiness.

Neither of them had heard a door at the other end of the room open softly.

"Now I wonder where Louis is?" Nash asked, knocking his cigar ash into the fireplace. "Since Sanders has ordered us not to go off the place, the only way to break this news to Hilary is—"

"What news?" asked Hilary, coming swiftly across the room. "What do you mean? Where is Louis? What news?"

Brent sprang to his feet with an exclamation.

"Why—hello, Hal!" said Nash gently—though what color there was in his weather-beaten face had left it.

"I'm here—I've been here all the time," she said in a low, even voice. "I'm going to stay here. Now you can tell me the news."

Nash drew a cushioned chair toward her. "I'm afraid you *are* going to stay here, Hal," he said with a twisted smile. "The fact is—we all are."

She looked at him; and from him to Brent—who, since his first cry of aston-

ishment, had not spoken. "You—and John"—she used the name quite without after-confusion—"are going to stay here? Nash! What do you mean? Are you serious, or is it just a cruel joke?"

He put her quietly into the big chair before he answered at all. Then he said, without looking at her: "I'm afraid it isn't a joke. You see, Louis's boy—there's a bit of a complication. The doctor's afraid we'll all have to be quarantined for a while."

The long room was almost dark now, but Brent, who assured himself he was merely an onlooker, saw Hilary's face slowly whiten. (At the same time he wondered at the unaccountable contraction of his pharyngeal muscles.) "You say that *we*—we all shall have to be quarantined?" she repeated difficultly. Then, with a burst of pain: "Where is Louis? How long have you known this? Why didn't he tell me?"

"There," said Nash soothingly, though beads of cold sweat stood out on his forehead, "it's been only half an hour. And I guess Louis—I guess he felt too bad."

"Yes, yes," she replied hastily, "that was it of course. He felt too—oh, oh, it's horrible! It's—" She buried her face in her locked hands.

The two men, standing above her, avoided each other's eyes. Then Brent, with a sudden return to what he called sanity, laid his hand on her shoulder and said authoritatively: "Come, Hilary. This is being childish and utterly absurd. Sit up—stop crying."

Comer was ready to murder him. But Hilary sat up at once, and said in a perfectly even voice: "Yes—you're right. I'm being a baby. But I wasn't crying," she added ingenuously; "I was—only thinking."

"Well"—Brent smothered a smile that of itself had started to be rather an uncertain smile—"think of the practical necessities of the situation: we're here for some days; you'll want to telephone for things; unless—" He stopped, abruptly.

"No." Returning color swept her cheeks. "I have nothing. All my trunks are at the dock—the North Ger-

man Lloyd dock," she added a little defiantly, to Nash.

"I'll call 'em up," was all he said, "and the hotel. I suppose you'll want to talk to your maid."

"I let her go for the rest of the day," said Hilary, with still heightening color. "She was to meet me—on board."

"I see," returned Nash, his voice not varying by a quiver. "She was to meet you on board. Then I'll telephone the P. and O. dock and send word to the *Monitor* to have her return to the Astor House and wait for you. Also"—he was at Louis's desk, with the receiver in his hand—"I'll tell them to hold our—to hold our rooms."

A sharp little sound came from Hilary. Brent quietly left the room.

"I think this is best," Nash explained to her, head averted, "because it will allay any comment that might be made, on our being found out here this last day together."

"Yes," she said faintly.

"Afterward"—he continued to speak in the precise manner that came oddly from him—"you will of course carry out your arrangements as you choose to make them."

"Nash!" she cried suddenly—beechingly.

"Just a minute"—he was giving a number. And it happened that as Louis came in, wild and disheveled, from the fog outside, he found Hilary with her hand timidly on her husband's arm, and heard Nash say:

"Mr. and Mrs. Comer, do you understand? Mr. and Mrs. Comer are in quarantine at Mr. Pembroke's, but you are *to hold their rooms*."

Louis staggered into a seat.

"Oh—and send out that big portmanteau, will you? Yes, leave it at the gate. Oh, thanks! I guess it's nothin' serious," Nash concluded before hanging up. "I guess you'll see us back in a few days. G'bye."

He turned. Hilary also—and gave a little cry.

"Hello, Louis," said Nash cheerfully; "you back again? Lord!" he remembered. "I forgot to tell 'em to send for my horse."

Once more he turned toward the desk. And the eyes of the two, Louis and Hilary, met, through the heavy shadows, in silent, sickening misery.

When he rose from the telephone a moment later, "Guess I'll go down to the gate and see what's happened to Prika," he said carelessly. "Left her there, like the coyote I am, since four o'clock—no blanket or anything. Oh—er"—at the door he looked back awkwardly. "So long," he said—"till dinner."

III

DINNER was over. What had been eaten, and what said, Brent alone of the four could have told. And even he had forgotten whether he answered Hilary that the quarantine would probably be for three days or for ten. Louis had prepared the meal; Brent and Nash had washed the dishes. The three, with Hilary, now sat together in the lamp-lit living room; unrootable Silence making an obdurate and graceless fifth.

Hilary sat with her hands clasped listlessly, arrestingly white against the soft blue of her gown. Louis was much occupied with the fire. Brent read—a volume of saccharine verse (so he dubbed it) that he had picked from off the table. Nash, as one was beginning to suspect of him, inevitably, puffed. He seemed the only one who, with his long black cigar, was enjoying any degree of contentment.

Ten minutes went by.

"What time'd you say the nurse was coming?" Nash asked, of nobody in particular; but Brent answered.

"Nine o'clock. He ought to be here now."

"Native, of course?"

"Of course."

Silence again pushed her chair forward, leadenly. Again Nash defied her.

"D'you send for anything, Doc?" The fraternal intimacies of the dish-washing had brought forth "Comer" and "Doc."

"Yes. My microscope and a box of slides, and some German magazines."

"German magazines!" Nash ejaculated. "Oh, Lord!"

Louis laughed constrainedly. Hilary gave an absent smile. Silence frowned, blightingly, and for another ten minutes put her heaviest foot forward.

Then Louis said, hesitatingly: "Oh, er—about the rooms."

Brent looked up from his book. Neither Hilary nor Nash knew where they looked.

"I thought—it would be most convenient," said Louis to Nash, colorlessly, "if—you and Brent took the sleeping porch. That will leave my room for Mrs. Comer, and I'll bunk out here. Sorry things are so cramped, but you see—this is a bachelor's bungalow."

"Nonsense," said Brent. "We'll have miles of room."

"You fix it just exactly to suit yourself, Louis," muttered Nash.

And Hilary said nothing.

Only after the nurse had come, and the three men had gone with him to that place in the passage where they had drawn a broad chalk line; when she was alone, she threw her arms up over her head as Louis once had done. "He doesn't intend to use the white room!" she exulted. "He doesn't intend to use it—yet!"

And when the men came back she was almost natural, asking eager questions, showing interest in every detail. It was understood, they told her, that from neither side was that chalk line to be crossed; to make surer, that from neither side was it to be approached nearer than by four feet. From the patient's point of view this was quite practicable; since Ping had of course his own kitchen and washroom apart from his master's house. The passage between his quarters and the bungalow being all of a hundred feet long, he was isolated; yet the nurse would have no difficulty of communication with the bungalow should emergency arise. Dr. Sanders, of course, would be in constant attendance; and as Louis's house was at the very end of Bubbling Well Road, and surrounded by extensive grounds, no one outside need fear contagion.

"But say," said Nash, when Brent had finished telling her, "I had a funny feeling when that chap crossed the line

—the nurse I mean. I was all shaky—heart poundin' like the devil; but he—he was as perky as a May morning. It takes a Chinaman to go into a cholera house as though it were a Christian Science church."

"Is there great danger for the nurse?" Hilary asked quickly.

"He has got through successfully with many cases," returned Brent, "but—there is always danger."

The danger that threatened them all—while Brent instantly added that, with proper caution, there was none—seemed to draw them singularly close for a moment. No one spoke; but the sharpest antagonism of the little group, the next moment, had lost its edge. Nash, having been to the gate to fetch the valises left there, announced that he was for turning in. Brent seconded him, shouldering his own satchel that the nurse had brought. There was the pseudo-cheeriness of "good nights."

Then Louis fell on his knees beside Hilary and hid his face in her lap.

"My dear," she crooned, stroking his hair—"my very dear!"

For a while he did not speak, but half knelt, half lay there at her feet, staring at the fire, and now and then kissing her slim hands. Finally he murmured: "It's the grotesqueness of it all that takes my nerve. That they—those two—should be here tonight! *Tonight*—ah, Harry, Harry!" He sprang up and caught her to him, holding her off then, that he might look deep into her eyes.

"I love you," he said reverently, at sight of their sweet, misty blue light. "They think I'm a cad—they think I only want you. But *you* know: you know I've scarcely touched you—all the times we've been alone together, I've never even kissed you, except once when I found you crying, and then—I lost my head, that's all. You know I fought this thing for months—that I didn't open my mouth until that day—"

"Oh, I know!" she cried, yearning over him.

"You know I'd give my life to marry you! But he'll never let us," Louis added bitterly. "This afternoon—I told you what he said: 'I don't do any

divorcing'—Hilary, I could have killed him! It isn't as though he loved you—"

"But I think," said Hilary tentatively, "he does love me—in his way."

"Oh, in his way—perhaps. But *love*—as we know it"—the man's breath came faster—"no, as we ought to know it—Harry! Can you think what it would mean? I tell you, the thought of him with you—in your adorable dainty sitting room, in your—no, no, I can't!" He dropped, limp, into a chair. "It makes me want to kill."

"Louis, Louis—beloved, *don't!*" She bent over him, in a heartbreak of sympathy. "Remember, all this is only a postponement. Afterward—what if he doesn't divorce me! Love," said Hilary, wiser in her generation than she knew, "has nothing to do with marriage. John says," she added, "marriage is only expediency."

"John?" Louis looked up. "Oh," his face darkening again, "you mean Brent."

"Yes. You remember," hesitatingly, "I tried to tell you once about John, but you stopped me. You saw that it hurt, even then, to remember that time; and you said"—deliciously she curled down into his arms—"that it was your affair to see that I should never be hurt again. Do you remember, Louis?"

"My lovely one!" At the touch of her soft, yielding body, Louis forgot Brent and everything else. "Harry, Harry, I adore you! Your beautiful black hair, with all the lights in it, and your eyes, and your white flower face, and your sweet mouth, and your throat—Harry, at least you're here in my house, in my arms! At least I can—"

"Mrs. Comer," called Brent, from the corridor, "will you see if your husband's slippers are in your valise? He can't find them, and he thinks the maid may have put them in yours by mistake."

The door into the corridor was shut; but Hilary had sprung up, cheeks burning. "Yes, certainly," she answered, in what she imagined was a perfectly composed tone of voice, "I'll look at once."

And with a backward glance at Louis—laying her finger on her lips, for

he was furious—she opened the door and joined Brent.

"Here they are." A few moments later she came to him again, from her room. "Alette did get them mixed—careless girl."

Brent took the stumpy slippers, and looked down at them. "I imagine such things are always happening to husbands and wives," he said reflectively. Then, with his keen smile at her: "You're going to bed? Good night."

And as he waited, hand on her door to close it for her, "Good night, John," she said, of necessity. "Louis has told me—I appreciate the motive that led you to come here today."

"But you think I'm an interfering idiot?" he flashed, still smiling. "It's the thing I do best, Hilary: my own affairs I've made a hash of, but when it comes to minding other people's, I'm almost brilliant."

And swinging the slippers, he closed her door gently and went down the hall.

Not to the sleeping porch, however, but in the other direction—to the living room. "Mrs. Comer's gone to bed," he told Louis casually. "She seems tired, and—"

"Why don't you say what you mean?" demanded Louis, leaping up with fight in his eye. "You were courageous enough this afternoon—the truth itself wasn't frank enough for you; why don't you say you ordered her to bed? Why don't you say you locked her in? Why don't you—"

"Because I didn't," said Brent tranquilly—at the same time admiring the splendid savage ardor of the creature, who stood there superb in his youth—panting a little. "Not any of those things. I simply asked her for her husband's slippers."

And continuing to swing them by their battered heels, he sauntered back to the sleeping porch.

Louis ground his teeth and sat down again. He would wait half an hour—it was ten now. At quarter to eleven, he got up drearily, made his bed—of the broad couch by the window—and threw himself down on it. The thought of sleep made him laugh, but his head ached

dully, and he was more comfortable lying down. The fire still burned, and he lay there watching its violet tongues and thinking of that one intoxicating moment with Hilary. There had been so much to tell her in the afternoon, before dinner; no chance for anything but bitter explanation. But tonight! He lay so still he could hear his own heart beat; and yet he did not hear the door from the hall open—almost noiselessly. Rather, when, with a strange sense of being companioned, he looked up, he was sure he saw a vision: of someone exquisitely slender, wonderfully sweet. Motionless, in the door, she stood, and the fire lit delicately the white dressing gown and the two long dark braids over her shoulders—braids that ended in curls like a baby's hair—and her smile. It was that that made him catch his breath. He gazed and gazed, unbelievably; and then, still from the door, "Good night," she said softly—and vanished.

In her own room—his room—she lay in her bed and sobbed quietly. "I don't think I could quite have borne it without that 'good night,'" she murmured brokenly—"in spite of John. *John!* Yes, it is grotesque. And Nash—"

Nash at that moment was lying blinking up into the murky sky—and talking, within himself, to someone. "You, whoever you are," he challenged the dimness, "*you* mussed up this game; now *you* give the new deal time! I was ready to play it the other way—you know I was. I had my teeth all set. But *you* wouldn't have it so. *You* juggled the cards; now *you* play fair! Give this new deal time!"

"Did you say something?" asked Brent, from out the dark.

"No," said Nash. "'Night, Doc."

"'Night," said Brent.

Quiet settled down over the bungalow. Only, at the end of a long hour, a man's tall form stole along the corridor, into a room that was still and white; and once within, found the great bed and fell on his knees beside it. The heavy fragrance of red roses came to him, but he buried his face in the cool coverlid and wound his arms up round the soft pillows. And at last the warm tears

trickled through his hands, and somehow he was comforted. He could feel Hilary's hands on his head, even her lips, heavenly gentle. And then her tears, too (had they not rained down her face till she slept, exhausted?) mingling with his, to consecrate that high-draped empty bed.

Louis knelt there a long time. When at last he left, and crept back to his bunk, it was with a sort of peace in his numb heart. But he locked the door of the white room, and the roses inside; and hid the key. There are chambers in a man's experience where he dare not trust even himself.

IV

HILARY was practising. During the three days that had passed over the quarantine she had formed the habit of two hours' hard work each morning after breakfast. And this morning, to the three men's resentful astonishment, she had also risen early and got the breakfast. Hilary making omelette and waffles! Perhaps burning her lovely hands on the smutty irons, or at the very least getting all hot and mussy! It was not to be thought of!

Only Brent, after that reflexive second thought of his (which for some reason was not working very well these days), said quickly: "Nonsense! Go along and get as mussy as you can—do you good!"

"I think so, too," Hilary said tranquilly, while Nash and Louis glared; and proceeded to eat every one of the waffles.

At the present moment they were plodding down to the gate, through the rain, to fetch the day's provisions. Hilary, at the piano, heard the door bang, and smiled—she wondered if they knew that over the operation of loading the wheelbarrow and trundling it back to the house, they were growing almost friendly. Out of the corner of her eye she looked at Brent—who was reading in the window seat—and caught him smiling, too. She wished, a little crossly, that she could get over this fashion of thinking things at the same time as Brent.

"Do that last movement over again, Hilary," he called, humming it enthusiastically. "Ta, ta, da, la la *la*—the water motif—delicious!"

"I thought you were reading," said Hilary, not turning round.

"I am one of the few persons," he returned modestly, "who can do two things at the same time—and enjoy them enormously. *Please!*"

So Hilary played. She rather liked having Brent, the unruffled impersonalist, say "please" to her like that. The unruffled impersonalist let his German magazine tumble softly to the floor, while he stared out at the rain, and listened. The water motif threaded its delicate way, purling, tripping, through the quiet of the big living room; Brent, gazing at the rain, saw Hilary as he had used to see her, as she had used to come into the *pension* after her lesson—flushed, ecstatic, the little blue bonnet pushed back impatiently from the dark hair.

"Hilary," he said involuntarily, "have you still got that blue bonnet?"

The water motif broke off with a brusque discord. "No," said Hilary briefly—and crashed into the *Sonata Appassionata*.

Brent tackled his dream analysis again. The Germans were wonderful at these things; this Schwartz, now—what was that Hilary said to him the first morning of the quarantine? "Psychologically, it must be a very interesting situation!" And the bitter little laugh with which she recognized his position in the affair, as a man evaporated into a scientist. Well, of course, Brent assured himself quickly, that *was* his position; only—bother Schwartz, and the whole pile of German magazines! "Hilary—" he began tentatively.

Nash and Louis stomped in, dripping, and at the same time the telephone rang. Brent said a low and fervent "Damn!" and flung himself into an article on anthropoid apes.

"Hello—hello," Hilary was saying. "Yes, it's I, Betty. How do you do? . . . Oh, rather well, thanks—that is, we're waiting to hear our doom this morning. The doctor is going to tell us

if we can break quarantine tomorrow. . . . Yes, wouldn't it be splendid! But we don't know yet—he's coming at eleven. . . . Yes." (The two men standing near saw Hilary bite her lip.) "It's been rather dreadful; but Mr. Pembroke has been—the kindest of hosts. . . . What? Oh!" (She turned her face away from the two altogether.) "Shall we go on to Manila just the same? I—don't know, Betty. You see, we—we may not get out tomorrow at all."

"I believe she hopes we won't!" Louis told himself—"actually!"

"And then," Hilary was saying, "of course we shall have to make entirely new plans. . . . What do you say? . . . Oh, there is? What opera company? . . . No, I don't think I've ever heard of it; but what excitement for Shanghai! Well, if they're to be in town a week we may hear them. . . . Thursday? Why, of course, Betty, I should love it—if this miserable quarantine is lifted. . . . What? . . . Oh! Yes, yes, of course—just a minute; I'll ask him."

She turned from the telephone and said to Nash: "It's Betty Fayerweather, and she says the Tivoli Opera Company is coming to town next week. She—wants us to go with her, Thursday."

Louis gave an exclamation. "Hilary!"

"What shall I answer?" Hilary asked her husband.

"Tell her yes," said Nash gruffly. His right hand tugged at the ragged mustache that hid his mouth.

So Hilary told her yes. "That is, if it can be arranged, Betty," she added, being a very woman where it came to shifting decisions onto others, and then promptly recapturing them for herself. "Did you go to the hunt yesterday?"

... With Mr. Chetwynd, *of course!* Betty, Betty! . . . No, I'm not teasing; I'm only wondering when you're going to let me give an announcement party, that's all! . . . Nonsense! Well—good-bye, dear. . . . Yes, of course I'll let you know—the minute we know ourselves. Good-bye."

Hilary turned round from the telephone. Louis and Nash waited; the moment, in its suspense for each of them, was dynamic.

"H'm—Betty will certainly marry Mr. Chetwynd," Hilary said pensively, wrinkling up her nose.

Louis turned on his heel. Nash muttered, "By jiminy!"

"Well, don't you think so?" asked Hilary, and went back to her practising.

Later, when Nash was getting lunch, and Brent was on the veranda interviewing the doctor, "Harry," Louis asked her hotly, "do you realize what you did just now? You gave that—that—you gave Nash to understand that when quarantine's lifted, you'll go back with him!"

"Well," said Hilary, unperturbed, "so I shall. Don't you see"—at his sharp cry—"it will have to be begun all over again!"

"What?"

"Why—everything. Nash will have to go away; I shall have to come to you again. I couldn't just stay, you know."

"Why not?" demanded Louis imperiously.

"It"—her lip trembled a little—"I think that would be horrid. It would look so—so *cowardly*. Not like coming of my own free will. It would look—"

"Well, I don't understand you!" he declared turbulent. "And let me tell you it made me feel like boiling over when you gave Nash to understand that—"

Hilary reached up and kissed him. "You're a very foolish boy," she said softly—the least bit vexed with him for lecturing her. "You don't seem to remember that I love you."

"Well," said Louis, with a little laugh, half impatience, half relief, "sometimes you don't seem to remember it yourself."

At lunch Nash asked Brent, with a fine assumption of carelessness: "Well, what's the news? Going to let us go free, is he?"

Brent's conference with the doctor had lasted over an hour—was only just finished, in fact. Louis, too, leaned forward, waiting for the verdict. Hilary sat perfectly still, and looked at her plate.

"It's ten days," said Brent, wishing

there would not creep into his voice that tone with which he announced a major operation to a patient. "The authorities are coming down hard, because this is the only case reported since the clean-up, and they're afraid it's due to carelessness in reporting other cases."

"Oh! They're making an example of us!" said Louis savagely. Nash's face was a study.

Brent replied: "Sanders did all he could—told them he'd fumigate us from cellar to garret—but they're obdurate. And of course," he added, "Sanders couldn't give a very glowing report of the case as it stands."

"Things goin' bad over there?" Nash jerked his head in the direction of the passage.

"About as badly as cholera can go."

"And will that poor fellow die?" suddenly asked Hilary—who had not spoken a word since the announcement.

"It's probable. We can't tell until the crisis. The nurse is to signal with his whistle if there's any radical change."

"Bah!" Louis rose from the table violently. "He'd be better off dead—sweating through life for five Mexicans a month. And as for us, to be jailed up ten days by a groaning wretch of a coolie—it's unendurable!" He left the dining room abruptly.

"Young, isn't he?" said Nash, looking after him ruminatively.

Hilary, too, gave a murmured excuse and left the table. In the living room, where she found Louis, he gripped her hands. "Are you going to stand this?" he cried. "Seven more days like these last three of torture? Dogged, watched, spied on by—"

"I thought," said she soothingly, "they had been very considerate."

"Considerate! When they never leave us alone for five minutes—Brent, anyhow!" he added, with an impulse of justice. "You can be sure Brent fixed this up—I believe he *told* Sanders—"

"But, Louis," said Hilary, wide-eyed, "what can John think to gain from it? I'm nothing to John."

Louis scowled darkly. "I'm not so sure about that. Anyhow," sneeringly, "he's a philosopher: he wants to

'save' a situation. Well, he won't do it. Listen, Harry!"

She looked at him, half frightened. "What do you mean? What is in your mind, Louis?"

He caught her to him—reckless of the fact that the other two men might come in from the dining room at any moment. "You love me? I mean—it wasn't just what Brent said, an impulse, and because you were bored with your husband? You really love *me*?"

"Why, yes—of course. What," delicately disdainful, "does John know about it?"

"Then, listen: I'm going to get us out of here—tonight, do you see?"

"Louis!" she breathed fearfully.

"Yes." He continued to speak in a low, cautious voice but with intense excitement, and holding her fast. "I've thought of a plan: the Lloyd steamer leaves tonight for Yokohama. We can get away after they've gone to bed, and be aboard her by midnight. She sails at one. Will you, Harry—will you?"

Hilary was very pale. "And when they discovered us? On the boat, I mean?"

"They won't discover us. I'll get Lawrence on the 'phone this afternoon—Lawrence is Lloyd's agent here, you know. I'll tell him a business friend of mine and his wife are going to Yokohama by tonight's boat, and ask him to save good rooms for them—tell him they're coming in late from Hankow, and won't have time to attend to it themselves. None of the Lloyd officers knows me, nor you either; and it'll be too late at night for any Shanghai people to be at the boat. We'll stay in our cabins until we reach Yokohama, and if by that time the fat's in the fire, we'll be together anyhow—and alone! Harry, say you will!"

She laid her hands on his breast. "But oh, Louis, if we *should* carry the contagion! If—"

"Nonsense!" he returned swiftly. "Didn't you hear Brent say the other day that there was practically no risk? Why, he told me afterward that if I were going to develop—and I'd been with Ping every day—he said that it

would be within three days. Well," triumphantly, "three days have gone by, and do I look as though I'm going to have cholera?"

She gazed at his splendid good looks adoringly. "No, no, dearest. But the contagion itself—they say it's in the very atmosphere; that one can carry it even without being infected oneself. Suppose that—"

"Nonsense," said Louis again, more shortly. "You heard Brent yesterday, and just now too: the authorities want to make an example of us. Well"—he smiled at her ardently—"I've something better to do than to be made an example of. Quick!" he added. "They're coming. *Will you?* Ah, my sweetheart!"

"I'll think it over—I'll let you know," she answered hurriedly. "Later—I—"

When Brent came into the room she was apparently engrossed with a book. Louis had disappeared.

"Oh!" With an uncertain smile Hilary put down the book. "Where's Nash?"

"Having a smoke in the kitchen. He says"—Brent smiled, too—rather a nice smile—"you don't like strong cigars."

She laughed a little constrainedly. "No, I don't. But cigarettes—you're going to have a cigarette? Yes, do have one. And sit here. I"—with another laugh—"I'm so bored, I want to talk."

Brent's profession had made him sensitive to undercurrents; he felt one here, of strong excitement, and was puzzled. She had been so self-contained at lunch.

"Well," he said, lighting one of the three cigarettes a day he allowed himself, and taking the chair she indicated, "what shall we talk about? You, me or trivialities? The one thing I refuse to talk about," he announced firmly, "is cholera."

The pink stole into Hilary's cheeks. "You really think Louis's danger—all our danger—is passed? You think this detention is simply to make an example of us?"

Brent looked at her hopelessly. "Hilary, Hilary, the *woman* you will be! I announce that I'm *not* going to talk

about it, and you promptly ask me three questions!"

"Only two," she protested, laughing a bit breathlessly. "Do answer them."

"I think," he said resignedly, "only a very ugly miracle could give Pembroke or any of us the cholera now. Our chief danger lay with Pembroke, you know."

"Then it isn't true that it can spread through the very atmosphere?" she continued, evidently exercising tremendous self-control. "Get into clothes and things, I mean?"

"Hilary"—he met her eyes truthfully—"no one can say with certainty. Those are points which Science, with all her untiring research, has never solved. I should say, *almost* certainly, not."

"Ah!" she breathed sharply.

"Why, what's the matter with you? Look here!" He threw away his cigarette and bent toward her. "Have you been making yourself ill worrying about this thing, and keeping quiet about it? You absurd child! Why, there isn't one chance in a million now!"

Hilary relaxed, smiled at him almost brilliantly. "That's all I wanted to know," she said.

They talked of other things then; he told her of his cases, as he had been accustomed to tell her four years ago—eagerly, ardently, as another man would have talked of his love; and she told him of her music, the struggle she had with her inborn indolence, to keep up her practising, now that there was no longer the inspiration of the master. "Louis has helped me with that," she said in a low voice; "you know he plays really beautifully."

"I didn't know," said Brent. "Doesn't Comer like music?"

Hilary sent him a swift glance of exasperation. They could not exchange a sentence without his dragging in her husband! "I believe he 'likes it,' yes," she said coldly; "he doesn't know one note from another."

"Most great people don't," said the physician meditatively. "It's a fact"—as she raised slightly mocking eyebrows. "Except for the musicians themselves, most great men haven't been able

to carry a tune. Take Napoleon, for example—"

"I don't want to," said Hilary perversely, rising. "I'm going to take a nap instead."

And when he reproached her for a bad pun, she laughed back over her shoulder, and said, "Ridiculous!" She was very young and girlish when she laughed, and he watched her white frock until it vanished. Of course, as he had smilingly informed Nash, he was not in love with Hilary now; but he found her absurd femininities and ingenuous childlikeness at twenty-six interesting. And he found himself, more vitally than he had ever realized, intent on preventing her making a mess of things with Pembroke. He believed, nay, was sure, he *could* prevent her; since Comer evidently wouldn't.

While he was staring at white corpuscles through his microscope, and laying plans, Hilary in the hall was telling Louis: "I'll go with you. I'll do it, only—I think we should leave some sort of word. Nash—he's really been very good—I couldn't have believed he'd take it so—so sensibly. I shouldn't like to go without some word to Nash."

Louis's eyes were burning, and his hands unsteady.

"You can leave him a note, of course. Only don't give the slightest hint where we're going. Don't even write it till just before we go. Oh," with a shaky laugh, "I'm absurdly nervous, I know; but we've been balked once and—it made me nearly crazy."

He stooped then and gathered her passionately into his arms. "Harry, Harry, you've made me so happy! You'll never regret it, dear heart—I won't let you! And as soon as the coast is clear, I'll telephone Lawrence."

At his suggestion she went to her room and packed a bag, with only necessary articles; feeling like a criminal as she did so, and yet—when she caught sight from one window of that taunting yellow flag waving triumphantly over Louis's letter box; from the other window, of that sinister chalk line—she would *not* be rifled of her happiness by a sordid thing with which she had no part. Louis was right; though she had taken it less bit-

terly than he, the three days had been torment. The more for Hilary in that she had had to serve as diplomat between Louis and the two who, he insisted, hounded him. No, with a weary little sigh, the situation was impossible; authorities or not, it had to end.

That evening before dinner Louis managed to tell her that he had got Lawrence. "He'll have the rooms—I gave the name of 'Dering'—and a cab to meet us at Nanking Road. I told him my friends were stopping at my godowns to collect some boxes—don't worry, darling, there'll be no one there. And at ten," he cried exultantly, "we'll be gone!"

V

BRENT remembered afterward that it had seemed an unusually long evening. They finished dinner early, and by a quarter to eight were sitting round the fire again; the rain had stopped, only to be succeeded by a drenching fog; the yellow thick of it seemed to press its face up against the windows and struggle to get in.

The doctor had made his evening visit and gone. From the grim place beyond the line came silence, and a faint point of light through the fog. Nash and Brent settled to a game of chess. Hilary was writing—Brent wondered why, since she was not allowed to post letters. Louis, at the piano, played a syrupy waltz.

Brent pondered what had got into him. At dinner he had been actually gay—laughing and telling stories, fairly scintillating; and through it all, friendly for the first time—quite the polished host at an intimate dinner party. Now he rattled off comic operas and ragtime at a deafening pace. What had got into him?

When she had finished her letter, Hilary came and watched the game for a while; but at the end of half an hour she said she was tired and was going to bed. Nash and Brent made a dash to open the door for her, arrived simultaneously, and stood one on either side as she passed through. She turned back

and smiled at them. "You are very good," she said, and went swiftly down the hall.

After that the game lagged. And Louis, who had risen when Hilary went out, to bid her an almost formal good night, abandoned the piano, saying carelessly: "Think I'll go over in the passage and ask how Ping is—perhaps take a stroll around, too, before turning in. Good night."

"Well!" said Nash, when he had gone. "He doesn't what y'might call *burden* us with his society, does he? Goes off the minute he can find the *limpin'est* excuse. And jumpy as a mosquito! Why, this afternoon, when I came in here once, he was sitting there at the desk with his hand on the 'phone, moonin' into space; and when he saw me he dropped the 'phone like a hot cake and stalked out. Oh, he's a nervous youngster."

"He was rather keyed up at dinner, too," said Brent. "The reaction, probably, from this morning's bad news."

"Well," said Nash slowly, worrying his cigar from one side of the ragged mustache to the other, "I've always liked Louis. I guess," with the hint of a faint smile, "it's same with me as with Hal: I can't help likin' him. And I've been thinking, penned up here—maybe I was wrong the other afternoon."

"If I see that Louis, or any other man, can give Hal what she wants," he told Brent steadily, "I'll help 'em with a divorce or whatever I've got. Lord, I've seen how it is for 'em, locked up here with us!"

Brent swept the chessmen off the board with a brusque hand. "That's exactly where you're irrational. Under these conditions *any* two people, who thought they were in love with each other, would be sure of it. And would make any other emotionalist about, sure of it," he added.

"Oh," drawled Nash, "I'm an emotionalist, am I? Well, Doc, there are worse things." With a grin, "Philosophers, for instance. No"—his brown face grew quiet again—"they've got seven more days of this inquisition to endure, poor children; after that—after that, I'll do what I can for 'em," he said.

"And you'll be doing them the greatest injury that you possibly could!" retorted Brent, so warmly that the other man turned, as he was leaving the room, and stared at him. "They—they aren't suited to each other," ended the physician (and philosopher) lamely.

"H'm." Nash looked thoughtful. "I wonder?"

He went on back to the sleeping porch. From Hilary's door, as he passed it, there came no light.

Brent, left alone in the living room, decided to fall in with Louis's fancy for a stroll. Though the fog outside looked forbidding enough, he felt restless for some reason, and rather exhilarated by the idea of defying it. He found a heavy raglan and went out.

Louis's place boasted several acres—which ought to have been the salvation of the four shut up within it, had not the rain intervened, so far, between them and even out-of-doors. Brent struck off down the drive, the fog instantly swallowing him up.

When Louis came back from his long-distance parley with the nurse the living room was empty. And from the sleeping porch came a regular though muffled sound of snores. All the bungalow, except the long, glowing living room, was in darkness.

Louis stood considering for a moment; then he crossed the room quickly and switched off the lights. After that, he sat down and waited. The clock struck ten.

Meanwhile Brent was wondering why, in the course of his prowling the grounds, he did not meet Louis. He had paced up and down the drive for half an hour, and was now striding round the path that circled the place. At one end of it was a short cut to the road which tradesmen used, and which was quite near the house; but this, with everything, now was shawled about by fog. The yellow murk was like an envelope into which the letter of the world had been put—and lost. Only the shadows of gaunt trees stood up disdainfully; and once the branches rustled with the swift swinging of a native cat—wildcat, the Occidental names it. Brent heard

the shrill whine of its call—then the answer, and the sound of sly creeping through the trees.

A moment after, another sound came to him, that made him stop entirely still and listen. It was the sound of low murmuring; but he knew the voices. His whole brain seemed to freeze—to the consistency of ice, rigid, but very clear. Lips grim, he moved along the tall hedge that screened the path from the road.

"Can you see, Harry? Step down a little here—so! Now keep your hand on my arm—we'll have to go single file here—and in five minutes we'll be free. *Free*, do you hear, Harry?"

Through the fog an arm of steel shot forward. "You *curl*!" panted Brent, clutching the other man. "You skulking, contemptible cur! So that was what you were up to!"

Louis struck at his head, blindly—hit him. There was a woman's terrified cry. And for a breathless moment the two men grappled together fiercely. Then, "There's no use fighting," Brent said curtly; "I can telephone the police in three minutes, and have you stopped before you'd get half a mile down the road. If you've *any* sanity left you'll follow me back to the house. Hilary, where are you?"

She came without a word, and stood beside him. "Take my arm," he said briefly; "it's hard to see."

The grim little procession probed its way back to the bungalow; Hilary holding Brent's arm in the groping, Louis this time walking alone. Arrived at the house, "Put this in your room," Brent told Hilary, giving her the little packed bag, "and take off your things. Then come back here."

She disappeared with the bag. And in the blinding light that Brent had switched on he and Louis regarded each other face to face; at which moment in the doorway appeared Nash Comer, looking at them speculatively, and twisting the frogs of his pink pajamas.

"Seem's though there's some row on," he commented mildly.

"There is," said Brent through set lips. "If you'll go back to bed, we'll settle it."

"Why, sure—sure, Doc—so long as you don't wake me up again, bangin' round the house. Hello!" catching sight of a light down the corridor. "Hal's up, too. So it was a three-cornered row?" he asked shrewdly.

"Yes!" said Brent.

"They generally are," Mr. Comer reflected. "All right—I'm off. Only—don't keep Hal up till morning," he said in a different voice.

When he had gone: "So you thought you'd play at *that* game!" Brent faced Louis again—with eyes in which everything but contempt was frozen over. "Do you realize that—"

"Don't be melodramatic," begged Louis wearily. "Nothing's happened, so what's the use?" He sank down into a chair, seeming to collapse within himself. His eyes burned out of a quite colorless face; his clothes were torn, his hair disheveled. Hilary, as she came in and silently sat beside him, thought he looked ghastly.

Brent turned to the woman. "Have you any idea from what you have escaped just now?" he asked her curiously. "Do you know what Pembroke was leading you into?"

"Oh, sit down, Brent," urged Louis lifelessly; "you never loved a woman, so what do you know about it?"

"Nothing, perhaps," Brent retorted, continuing to stand. "At least, not enough to expose her to the filth of a public pesthouse, or, worse still, of a Shanghai prison."

"What do you mean?" Hilary spoke for the first time, utterly pale. "If they had found us out, would they have—"

"When they had found you out," Brent emphasized—"there's no 'if' about it—they would have arrested you for breaking the health laws; and if you'd been lucky, you would have been sent to the city quarantine station. Do you know what that is?" he demanded; and, turning to Louis: "Do you? It's a broken-down hovel on the edge of town, where the vileness, the—we won't go into that," he broke off shortly. "I've described it vividly enough to the city health authorities. *That* would have been if you'd been lucky."

"And if not?" whispered Hilary—her very lips white now.

"If not—you'd have been locked in the criminal ward for contagious diseases, which," grimly, "no one has ever dared describe. And you"—he blazed at Louis—"you never thought of that, I suppose! It never occurred to you that in a port where a case of cholera has been discovered, every train, every ship, is ransacked for possible carriers of the contagion! This woman you *love*, you would have led into these unspeakable things, as lightly as into a ballroom! God deliver me from such love!"

Hilary turned toward Louis—slowly, and with a dynamic question in her eyes. The question deepened, as for the first time in their experience he appeared to her—under Brent's towering rage—insignificant. Mere shattered good looks, beside impregnable dignity.

"Did you not," she asked, almost woodenly—"did you not think of any of that?"

Louis drew a great breath, but he met her eyes unwaveringly. "No," he said—and dignity did come to him then—"I thought only of being alone with you."

Brent's sharp features softened at the look that came over her face. "The main thing," he said, less harshly, to Louis, "is for you to understand that for the future—until these seven days are up—you are not to repeat this mad experiment."

"Oh, you needn't work yourself up," said Louis dully. "I'll not try it again."

Hilary, with an odd finality hardening her soft voice, said, "No." Walking over to the desk, she picked up a letter that was lying on it. "I left this note for Nash," she explained to Brent simply.

He, who had been about to sit down, stood up again suddenly. "You—were—leaving that note for—your husband?" he repeated—gazing at her as though he really saw her for the first time in his life. (What he saw was the vision of Nash, tugging at the ragged mustache, and saying: "I'll do what I can for 'em.")

"You—you—what are you made of?"

Brent asked her, in a low voice that was more scathingly than the scalpel than all his fury toward Louis. "You marry a man, one in five million; you take his care, his goods, his unceasing thought for four years. Then you decide that another man pleases you better; you go to him—as calmly and self-approvingly as to church on Sunday. And when, by a quirk of circumstance, your husband finds you there, in his house, you say: 'I am here. I am going to stay here.' Not another word."

"But—" Hilary interrupted, standing thunderstruck.

"Wait. That man—your husband—instead of telling you to go to—the place you were headed for, receives your bland announcement without a word. More—he effaces himself at every conceivable turn, so that you and your chosen lover may suffer as little as possible. He"—Brent's voice became almost inaudible—"tonight he said he had been mistaken the other day—in refusing to give you the one thing else he could: divorce. He said: 'They've got seven days more to endure, poor children; *after that I'll do what I can for them!*' And you—ten minutes before—had been arranging to *leave him a note!*"

Hilary had sunk, almost fallen, into a chair. Her look of the child had dropped from her—forever; it was a woman, white and aware, who fixed her eyes fascinatingly on Brent.

Louis had sprung out of his lethargy, to stand by Brent, ready to do murder. But the man glaring down at the woman did not even see him.

"From beginning to end," he concluded his invective against her relentlessly, "you've treated the making and breaking of marriage like the making or breaking of an engagement to lunch; you've used it to serve your own ends, and when it didn't, you've placidly chucked it out. You—"

"Yes, John," said Hilary quietly, "you taught me to."

"Ah!" cried Louis, falling back into his chair again.

Brent gave a quick gasp. "What—what do you mean?" he stammered.

"I mean that you," said she clearly,

"told me that marriage was an expedient—that people who cared more for the general opinion than for their own freedom took to it as an expedient; that those who didn't, discarded it. When I was younger than I am now, you impressed me with your disappointment that I was not strong enough to be 'free'—you made me feel, though you may not have known it, my inferiority at not being able to look at these things in a casual light."

"Well, John," said Hilary, with her woman's eyes, "from that day I have been trying to look at them casually. It seems I have succeeded better than my teacher."

There was a moment of entire silence. Brent, staring at her like one in a trance, had dropped down, finally, into a chair. At the end of the long moment, Hilary added in a low voice: "I realize what you say about Nash. I will—make it up to Nash."

"Harry!" cried Louis fearfully.

"Will you, Hilary?" Brent spoke for the first time, unsteadily. "If you will, you—it's the most generous lot of coals you can heap on my head." And, still staring at her, with no further word of good night, he went out.

VI

"NASH," said Louis diffidently, "may I speak to you a moment?"

Both the diffidence and Louis's expression—as Nash wheeled round abruptly in the window seat to look at him—were so astounding as to indicate revolution of some sort. "Why, sure, Louis," said the older man, making room; "it's what I've been tryin' to get you to do for four days."

"I know it." Though Louis sat down, he did not look at Nash, but straight ahead of him. "I—I tried to stand you out, but—it's no use. We've got to talk, you and I; there's no other way."

Nash shifted his cigar. "Talkin's hard," he mused, "when it comes to the woman."

"That's just it!" Now Louis turned to him eagerly. "She *is* the woman,

Nash—so help me God! There never was another; only flirtations."

"What about Betty?" asked Nash, regarding him. The two had the living room to themselves, and the sun streamed in there this morning—broad-rayed and glorious, as though the fog of yesterday had never been.

"Well, I was rather—rather engaged to her," Louis said, speaking of Betty; "but she broke it off. As long ago as last winter. She—"

"She broke it off about a month after Hal came to town, didn't she? Humph! You said yesterday—when we were talkin' about riding—'Betty's a plucky little thing,'"

"She is. But it wasn't pluck, that. It was sheer inclination."

Nash took his cigar out of his mouth. "Pluck—inclination! Son," he said, "those are two things that a good woman interchanges till even she doesn't know the difference between 'em. How should you?"

"Well, I know in this case," insisted Louis stubbornly. "Because Betty told Harry that she knew it had all been a mistake—that we had never really loved each other, only drifted together for want of somebody else. And a woman always tells the truth to another woman."

"Oh!" said Nash. "Does she?"

"Yes. But—what I wanted to tell you, about Hilary—"

"Louis," Hilary's husband interrupted, "if Betty Fayerweather had had black hair instead of red, and if her eyes had been like violets in spring, 'stead of plain brown—"

"Oh, I know!" Louis smiled bitterly. "You think it's just the 'bone and the hank of hair.' You think—but what I wanted to explain," he broke off more quietly, "was how I came to care for Harry, and why I kept on coming to your house—as your friend. It seems, on the surface, a cad's trick."

"Only in story books," returned Nash, smiling a little; "where men and women live, it seems inevitable."

"Well," said Louis constrainedly, "I dare say you guessed—Brent gave me a dressing down last night."

"Humph!" said Nash. "Doc?"

"Yes. I must say, where Hilary's concerned, I think he hasn't much room to talk; but"—Louis flushed hotly—"what he did say, about you and your attitude to—to us, made me realize I'd have to explain to you."

"Louis"—the other man's voice altered, to take on a tone Louis heard for the first time—"explanations are for drawing rooms, not for the place where a man's slipping round in his heart's blood. Somebody's had to be spilt, and—you can't say I've whined that I'm *it*; but—don't 'explain' to me. If you want to talk about the future—that's another thing."

"Oh," muttered Louis; "very well. Er—Brent intimated," he proceeded uncomfortably, "that you—that you'd changed your mind about a—divorce."

"Yes," said Nash, smoking on steadily, "I have."

"But Harry," burst forth Louis, eager now to state his extraordinary case—"now Harry won't hear of it! She and Brent had a great row—and Harry," jubilantly, "showed Brent up for the inconsistent hypocrite he is, and then—at the end—turned round and said she realized the truth of all he'd said, and she would stay with you!"

"A-ah!" But the sharp exclamation of Nash's held no triumph. What he added, slowly, was: "Doc seems to have—influence with Hal."

"Oh," Louis returned scornfully, "he can talk. Women always go under to talk."

Nash fixed him with a look he did not care to meet—after the first instant. "The woman you are speaking of," said he, "is still my wife. If what you have to say of her is only—"

"No, no," Louis interrupted hurriedly; "for heaven's sake don't be angry—not you, too."

"Oh," said Nash drily, "of course not me. Well," he added, "if what you want me to do is to—ahem—persuade Hilary to accept a divorce from me, don't worry. I'll do it."

"Will you?" cried Louis, a tumult of relief flooding his handsome face. "Nash, it's bully of you! It—that's really one

of the things one calls great. Thank you!"

"Don't mention it," said Nash.

"And," somewhat shamefacedly, Louis added, "I want to apologize for the childish way I've treated you since we've been shut up here. It wasn't generous—it wasn't manly. I—"

Nash waved him aside. "A man," said he, looking at Louis through half-closed, speculative eyes, "is so many things; and—many men are so few things."

"Well, anyhow," Louis reiterated, laughing out of sheer sense of well-being, "I must have seemed frightfully a child. I hope you'll forget it."

Nash rose to his stumpy brown height. "I will," he promised, holding out his hand.

But when, a few minutes later, Hilary came into the room as Louis left it, "Hal," Nash asked her bluntly, "is that the man you think will make you happy?"

And she with that new look of hers this morning that he could not fathom, answered as bluntly: "I don't know."

"Good!" said Nash. "Then we've something to start from. Sit down a minute, won't you—if you'd nothin' else you wanted to do."

"All I wanted was to talk to you," she said simply.

"Good," Nash said again. "Does it strike you, Hal, that this is the first time we've ever had a talk together—a real talk, I mean? Not since we've been married—four years—have you and I talked of anything more important than railroad tickets and whom to ask to dinner."

"It did strike me—last night," Hilary said. "It's—it's rather odd, isn't it?"

"We could've talked that first day here, when you asked me: 'Nash, why didn't you tell me you knew—about Louis and me?' Only I, like a great, lumberin' idiot, said: 'Why didn't you tell me—about you'n Louis?' And of course that queered the game."

"Yes," she acquiesced.

They, too, sat in the window seat—at least Hilary sat in it, the sun streaming in on her black hair, and lighting the new

wistful shadows in her flowerlike face, almost to the glory of the supernatural. Nash and his short squareness occupied a chair opposite. He looked tired today, and old; his leathery brown face seemed to sag into his neck.

"I only want to say to you, Hal," he went on gently, "what you already know, I guess—that I love you better than anything I could ever get out o' this world, and it'd be hurting me a lot more than I ever want to be hurt to keep you from any happiness you could get—from me or anybody else. If you want Louis, my dear," he told her quietly, "I want you to have him."

Hilary tried to speak, could utter only an inarticulate little sound; and set her trembling lips determinedly.

"Why, I know"—he spoke for her, gazing straight into her eyes—"when you met me you were so tired of knockin' about by yourself—being battered round among that student crowd and their *philosophies*—you just took to marriage with me like a worn-out child to a big easy chair. And I did make it kind o' an easy chair for you, didn't I, Hal?" wistfully.

She dashed away two tears. "Oh, you did, you did!"

"And then when we'd been married a while, and came out here, why—you didn't need the easy chair any longer, and I—why, Hal, don't you think I ever had any dreams about your bein' in love with me! I only prayed the Lord, thanking Him with every breath I drew that you'd been able to marry me at all; I only prayed that you'd be just—just *fond* of me a little. That my roughness and my swear words and my mis'able cigars wouldn't utterly disgust you; that you'd be willing just to go on being my wife."

There was silence in the glowing room for an instant. Then Nash added: "That couldn't be. You met Louis; and the minute I saw you together I knew—why, shucks, look at these hands!" He held them up disdainfully. "Look at me, all of me—beside Louis!"

"Don't," she begged, covering her eyes. "It's cruel! Oh, Nash—"

"Now don't you go getting any silly

notions of injustice in your head." He frowned at her severely. "I guess, when it comes to judgin' horseflesh, or pickin' a brand o' tea leaves, I can give Louis a few points for his beautiful eyes. But as for whistling the Merry Widow waltz—Lord! Or readin' Omar Khay-what's-his-name, or tellin' a Corot from a summer squash—Hal, my dear," he finished contemptuously, "I'm about as good as the next middle class farmer at those tricks!"

"Don't you see how you're making me feel?" she implored passionately. "Don't you see how wretchedly small and silly all those things—"

"No," he interrupted her, "no. Don't you make that mistake, or think I'm making it. The things are silly, maybe, but the fact that's back of the things—the fact o' birth, breeding, whatever you choose to call it—that you're either born with or *ain't*," said Nash grimly, "that's not silly—it's tragedy."

"And when Louis, who had it, came along—and with everything else into the bargain—do you think I thought it was silly in you to see it? All I felt hard about—and that did come down on me, Hal—was that you didn't come out and tell me about it. I'd always tried to treat you on the square, and I thought—why, honey, don't you see"—he leaned forward and timidly touched one of her slender hands—"don't you see how simple it would all have been if we'd had this talk two months ago?"

Hilary gazed at him wonderingly. "I thought," she faltered—and the wonder was at herself—"I thought you *wouldn't understand!*"

"Well"—he drew a deep breath, but tightened his tentative hold of her fingers—"now you know I do. And you know that it's for you to say the word. From this time forward you're the boss. If you want to marry Louis—"

"I think I want," said Hilary almost reverently, "only to stay with you—if you'll let me."

"Let you!" Nash fairly shouted. Then, as instantly, and very quietly: "No, honey—that won't do. You're all stirred up now—I've worked on your

feelings—God knows I didn't start to, though. And really"—he watched her closely—"you love Louis."

"I—don't know," she said slowly. "Last night—something happened last night that—I thought I loved him so that nothing could ever shake me," she concluded desperately, "but last night I—I was shaken."

Nash's soul sent up a tumultuous hallelujah.

"And when you've once felt that about a person," she continued, locking and interlocking her fingers, "that sickening sweep of distrust—even though it never comes again—but, oh, I think it *must* come again!" cried Hilary, stating her whole fear and her agony. "It would never have come at all if—if there hadn't been something there that would make it come again—and again."

Nash was silent. In the face of truth there is nothing to say.

"So if you'll let me," she said, and offered her hands with a smile he never should forget, "I'll come back. And next Monday—we'll go home."

He shook his head, speechless, gripping her hands till the rings bit the soft flesh; but she said "Yes, yes"—and then left him quite brusquely.

Only after she had gone did he notice that Brent had come in.

"Well, Doc"—he tried vainly to subdue the turbulence in his voice—"what're you lookin' so low about?"

"Nothing." Brent came and flung himself on the couch. "Do I look low?"

"We-ell, nobody'd mistake you for the statue o' Hilarity. What's the matter? Philosophy running short?"

Brent turned on him violently. "That's a word," he said, "I wish never to hear again."

Nash stared. "Say," he drawled, "do you know, when you're mad you're *good-lookin'*! It's a fact, by Zedekiah!"

Brent gave a queer, short laugh. "A fact then that does me precious little good. I don't get 'mad' often."

"Well, I'd cultivate it," Nash said earnestly. "Makes a thunderin' handsome man of you. Say," he added, jerking his head in the direction of Ping's

quarters, "things pretty darn serious over there this morning, what?"

"Worse and worse," Brent nodded. "Li, the nurse, signaled to me just now, and asked me to telephone for Sanders. He came up the drive, the moment after—Sanders I mean; I'm waiting now for him to disinfect.

"Humph," glancing at Nash, he declared suddenly, "you don't look any too fit yourself. What's the matter with you?"

"Me?" said Nash scornfully. "Pooh—nothin'."

"H'm—well, you look—Come over here. Stick out your tongue. Throat sore?"

"Nope," Nash returned mendaciously.

"It isn't?" suspiciously. "Well, it ought to be. Stop smoking. I wouldn't give ten cash for your resistance at any time—a cigar hasn't any."

"Tut-tut," Nash grinned, blowing a thick stream of smoke from his very sore throat at that minute. "Doc mustn't call names!"

"It's the truth—that's just about what you are: a puff of cigar smoke. Now you go back and lie down—get a good nap before tiffin, do you understand?"

"Well, maybe I will," Nash agreed, with amazing docility. "But don't you think there's anything the matter with me," he called back belligerently from the door, "'cause there ain't. I'm just a little tired, that's all."

"Just a little tired." The jadedness that had been in Brent's face when he came in gave place to a dawning anxiety. "Just a little—"

Sanders called to him then, and he went out on the porch. He did not tell Sanders that Nash felt just a little tired.

But after lunch, as he was going over to the line to speak to Li, he came upon Hilary—standing huddled up against the end of the veranda, her hands pressed to her temples.

"Do you hear? Do you hear?" she cried shudderingly! They were the first words she had had alone with him since the preceding night. "Oh, I came just to inquire—just for a minute; and now—that sound—I can't go away."

From the place where Ping lay came long, strangled groans, broken by hoarse muttering, and every now and then a wild guttural cry. Brent himself lost color slightly.

"You *must* come away," he told her decisively, leading her back into the house with a compelling firmness. "And you're not to go out there again. All fever illnesses have phases that—"

"But I kept thinking"—Hilary had fairly collapsed into a chair, quivering—"if it *had* touched us—*any* of us! John—John, when—when we planned *last night*, I didn't realize. The danger, I—"

"Of course you didn't. And now"—he had come to stand near her, looking down—"I'm going to say a strange thing: I'll never cease to be glad that you planned last night, Hilary—that you all but carried out the plan. Because if you hadn't, I should probably never have seen the truth."

"Oh!" she cried, not looking at him.

"For anything I may have made you suffer those years ago," he said, "you punished me last night. And—I thank you."

He was smiling at her, and thrust out his hand. But she saw all at once the little lines of weariness round his eyes; and the stone in her breast that his memory, those years, had been, dissolved—vanished away. "I thank you, John," she said unevenly, and smiling, too, through the bright glitter of tears; "for if you taught me wrong, in the end you've taught me marvelously right."

And it was as they stood there, hands joined, gazing deep at each other, that Nash came to the door.

"H'm!" Something odd, acute, flashed over his brown face before he gave that short dry cough. "Say, Doc, do you think you could come and have a look at my throat? I feel pretty hot, and as though—well, maybe I'm going to have a chill."

VII

BRENT threw the paper down on the breakfast table where Louis lingered, smoking. "Well!" he said. "Have you seen that?"

"What?" said Louis sullenly. Sullenness was his part, these days, in place of his former savagery and the brief period of high spirits which had withered away since Nash's illness—and Hilary's oblivious solicitude.

"Look on the first page." Brent opened the newspaper with suppressed excitement.

Manager Biehler, of the Tivoli Opera Company, tells us of a genius in our midst. Impresario former concert manager for Hilary Temple, now Mrs. Nash Comer. Hopes to persuade beautiful virtuoso to give concert here. Mrs. Comer still in quarantine at Pembroke bungalow.

"Well, what do you think of it, eh?"

"I think it's a piece of damned impertinence!" cried Louis furiously. "The publicity of it—the cheapness—the—and daring to suggest that she'd give a concert! By Jove, if I were out of here, I'd—"

"Well," said Brent, beginning to stack dishes, "I dare say she will—give a concert. Why shouldn't she?"

"Oh, certainly! Why shouldn't she, indeed!"

"Do her a great deal of good, after being shut up here—take her mind off things. I approve it thoroughly, myself."

Louis glared at him. The calm arrogance of the man: "I approve it!" "Well, I don't," he retorted, and gathering up the coffee pot and a toast rack, he departed to the kitchen.

Later he returned to the *North China Daily News*. The column under the headlines Brent had read was entirely devoted to Hilary: her success in London, her student days in Vienna—Louis scowled fiercely over that part—her beauty, her husband's wealth and their popularity in Shanghai; ending with an account of the episode of the quarantine at Mr. Pembroke's bungalow, that included not only the master of the sick servant, but Mr. and Mrs. Comer and Dr. John Brent, "who were calling"! It was all, to Louis's mind, hopelessly sensational, hopelessly vulgar, and in connection with Hilary, *impossible*.

Hilary herself he was finding impossible nowadays, for that matter—at least in her treatment of him. What

Louis complained of was that she didn't treat him at all; she obviously had no time for him. Since Nash had come down, by the most damning (for Louis) stroke of luck, with a sharp attack of bronchitis—threatening to become pneumonia had it not been for Brent's unceasing vigilance—Hilary had spent every minute of every day with her husband. Only three had passed, it is true, since the night of the attempted escape; but to Louis they seemed thirty, and every one of them blacker than the day before.

He threw the newspaper down disgustedly. Then his eye fell on something in the next column that made him catch the paper up again.

It is hoped that Miss Bettina Fayerweather, Mrs. Comer's great friend, will add to the success of the proposed concert by lending the charm of her beautiful voice. Miss Fayerweather has a lovely mezzo-soprano, of a curious pathetic timbre that produces a powerful effect on her hearers. Of additional interest is the rumor of the engagement of this very pretty young woman to one of the wealthiest young business men of Shanghai. Miss Fayerweather has our sincere best wishes. As for the young man, congratulations would be superfluous; We hear that he is quite sufficiently elated as it is.

"Well!" muttered Louis. "She certainly hasn't wasted much time about it." Six months ago he had been engaged to her himself—*rather* engaged. She couldn't have cared very much or—dash it, she *was* pretty, you know. Bewitching, really, with her mass of unruly auburn curls and her big brown dancing eyes—that somehow Louis had not seen dance for a long time. And she *had* understood a chap until—there was Harry. When Harry came, he had cared neither for understanding nor anything. He had rushed headlong into the abyss, and been well shattered for his temerity. God, if only Harry would talk to him! When she did talk, her hurried, unnatural manner drove him wild; yet the day when she had promised to flee away with him, she had been ardent enough—as mad as he. No, he knew. He dated her change from that night, and Brent's attack on him. He hated Brent.

The man now, when he spoke to

Hilary: "Yes, he is better—" "No, perhaps not such a good night last night"—Lord! To mouth such dust and bones to a woman like Harry! And always about her husband. Louis watched them, tense, ever waiting for Brent to "come to life," ready, if he should come to life, to fly at him.

But the days had gone by, and Nash was going to sit up, and still Brent showed Hilary only the courteous unconcern of the professional manner. Louis told himself that Brent was deep—very deep; that he was a man to look out for. And he proceeded to look out for him, this poor Louis, until he very nearly went crazy with the responsibility.

In Hilary's room, for which she had exchanged with Nash and Brent the sleeping porch, Nash and his wife and his doctor were getting rather well acquainted. "I've had a better time since I've been sick," the invalid said that morning, "than in all the rest o' my life put together."

"Well, I haven't," retorted Brent. He was sitting on the foot of Nash's bed, while Hilary, near by, lent her exquisite hands to—*darning socks!*

"No-o, it's been kind o' tough on you, hasn't it, Doc? First havin' to persuade yourself and Hal here that it wasn't cholera. Oh, I know," as the two started guiltily. "I wasn't blind, if I was shakin' like the palsy. You thought I was in for it—and all of us. Then when that scare was over, you had a cantankerous sick man to coax away from pneumonia into just a silly case o' bronchitis; to say nothin' of Hal to pacify and Louis to jack up into good humor. Oh, you've had your job cut out for you, Doc!"

"Nonsense!" said Brent tersely. "Hilary was a Spartan major. And—we've each had our score of the music to face, you know."

"Ye-es; only yours was the drum and the triangle and the sandpaper and all the darned gewgaws at once. Wasn't it, Hal? Fact is—"

"Have you taken your beef tea?" demanded Brent.

"No. But—"

"Then take it at once—I'll go and heat it for you. And don't you talk—not another word. I'll be back in five minutes." Brent bolted.

"Say," Nash began, the minute he had left the room, "there's a new kind of man, Hal: one that don't want to hear o' his good deeds! Brent's *some* man, ain't he, Hal?"

"Yes," said Hilary, not looking up from the hole she was mending.

"Brought me through this like an army surgeon, didn't he? And cheered you up—kept you regularly beamin', hasn't he?"

"Yes," said Hilary, still over the sock.

"Well, he's a great fellow. Seems to have got over, entirely, all that philosophy business." The shrewd eyes from the invalid's bed watched her searchingly. "Don't talk any more about it, does he?"

Hilary's needle snapped. "No," she said; and left the room, obviously to get another.

"Doc," Nash asked Brent, as the latter appeared with a steaming cup, "is it a good sign when a woman won't talk about a man?"

"Depends," said Brent, tying a napkin under Nash's chin. "Good or fatal. Search the man."

"I am. That's just exactly what I'm doin'," Nash drawled slowly; "and take it from me, he bears searchin'. Did you show Hal the paper?" he asked, making a wry face over the spoonful of beef broth.

"Yes—a moment ago. She says it's ridiculous."

"No such thing—we'll make her do it, eh, Doc? It'd liven Hal up, and I'd be proud as Punch, wouldn't you?"

"Why—of course," said Brent constrainedly.

"Back there in Vienna," Nash went on between sips, "you must have heard her play a lot."

"Yes, of course," Brent said again.

"She can play some, can't she? I may not know an octave from a turnip, but I know that Hal can certainly play some. Doc, old man," he said suddenly, "you're lookin' awfully ragged—

you're worn out with taking care o' me. Now you go and—”

“Stuff!” Brent cried angrily. “I never was better in my life. You drink that broth and stop—”

“I won’t do it. Not till you confess you aren’t as fit as you might be, and go take some rest yourself. You look all in.”

“You’re seeing visions,” Brent laughed shortly. “All that’s the matter with me is—listen!” he said suggestively. There came the drip-drip of the rain on the bungalow porch, relentless, everlasting; there came the plaintive piping of a rice bird, the hoarser note of a sleepy owl; and then—the thin monotony of a native chant borne to them faintly, from the fetid place where Li, faithful and unwearying, wrestled with the gods. “Over a Chinese ‘boy’!” Brent laughed again, but less steadily. “That’s what’s the matter with me: that eternal, hopeless chant, and—the sounds of the country, hopeless, too. I never heard them before.”

“That so?” Nash said, quite casually. “I have. But you’re mistaken: they ain’t hopeless, neither’s the country. Only—wakin’ up. Doc, will you get me a drink, like a good fellow?”

When Brent had left the room, the sick man sank back on his pillows with a mirthless laugh. “So—he’s hearin’ sounds he’s never heard before—*hopeless* sounds—and he thinks it’s Ping; he thinks it’s the country! Oh, my Lord, Brent, old boy,” with a wan smile, “your troubles are just beginning. And if that’s so,” Nash concluded, strangely, “I guess mine are about ended.”

He turned his face to the wall; and when Brent came back, it seemed that he slept.

VIII

“NASH”—Hilary came up to him, where he was sitting on the veranda, wrapped up in rugs, for the first time—“do you know that your—that our ship, the *Monitor*, is being held in quarantine in Manila, for cholera? Betty just told me. It’s—it’s rather uncanny.”

Nash looked up into her brooding

lovely face. “Pooh!” he scoffed. “That’s nothin’. Of course there were other cases in Shanghai besides Ping—all that clean-bill-of-health talk was a joy dream. And some of ‘em escaped out of town—that’s all.”

“Yes”—into Hilary’s blue-gray eyes came an odd expression—“some of them—escaped, out of town.”

“Why, honey,” he asked her, “what’s the matter? All this has got on your nerves, but—shucks! Ping’s coming along fine, and none of us could get it now. Why, even Sanders believes in us now—I should hope he did, our eighth day in this lock-up!”

“No,” said she, “of course none of us would get it now. I—I wasn’t thinking of that.” She sat down on the steps near him, leaning her dark head against one of the tall porch pillars; she wore a rough red coat—for, in spite of the fitful sun, it was inclined to be raw outside, and damp—and Nash thought her, with her hair curling in soft little rings round the pensive face, the loveliest thing he had ever seen.

“And in three days we’ll be free,” she was saying dreamily.

“Ye-es.” Nash looked down the drive at the letter box. “The yellow flag’ll be gone, and the line’ll be rubbed out, and—we’ll start fresh.”

“Oh, will you, Nash?” she begged in a low voice. “I’ve wanted to talk to you about that, but—”

“Look here,” he broke in, “I wasn’t meanin’ you and me when I said that—I was meanin’ *all of us*.”

“But I do mean you and me,” she insisted, “and you always put me off when I want to talk about it. I believe,” she said, almost with her old air of the perverse child, “you don’t *want* me to come home with you.”

“Want you?” The rugs fell, torn off, from Nash at one sweep.

Then he gathered them round him again. “No, my dear,” he said in his usual tones, “it won’t do.”

“Do you want me to stay with Louis?” she interrupted, watching him acutely. “To marry—Louis?”

The ragged mustache hid Nash’s mouth, until he spoke. When he did, it

was to say: "I want you—just to be happy. Not to keep on puttin' up with me because you— Damn it, Hal," he burst forth suddenly violent, "no man with a man's heart in his body wants a woman to make a sacrifice of herself for him!"

"Oh, I know!" as she shook her head impatiently. "You've persuaded yourself, since our talk the other day, that livin' with me is the one thing in this world you're really crazy about doing. That—why, Hal, I know you. But you can't fool me like you can yourself. Hello—there's the telephone. Anybody inside to answer it?"

"I'll go," she said, jumping up.

While she was gone Nash meditated. "No—she doesn't fool me. Nor this Doc Brent, either. Humph! Hasn't looked at a German magazine for five days! And this morning, when Hal was playin'—Lord, these philosophers, when once they fall in love!"

Hilary came out again. "Who was it, honey?"

"It was—Mr. Biehler."

"What'd he want?" With the invalid's famine for news, Nash snatched at every detail.

"Oh—nothing much. Will you go in now?"

"No. Sit down again a minute. So—Biehler just called up for—nothing much?"

"Oh, he wanted me to promise a definite date for the concert, and—"

"And—"

"There's really nothing more, Nash. No, I don't want to sit down; and you ought to go in. It's time for your egg-nog."

"Bother the egg-nog!" said Nash rudely. "Look here, Hal, I know all about this—I've read the papers. Biehler wants you to go back on the concert stage; and you—"

"And I don't intend to," she finished swiftly. "There! Now will you please go in?"

"Oh—all right," he grumbled. "Only, don't think you're deceiving *me*, my dear! 'Cause you ain't—a little mite."

She helped him out of his mound of wraps without answering. But, as they

were going in, she said, as though repenting her slight sharpness: "All this talk in the papers has been very stupid. I'm angry with Mr. Biehler about it. We went through all this before, he and I, when I was married; I think it's very bad taste, and most inconsiderate of him, to bring it up again now."

"Humph!" was Nash's only reply.

Louis was in the living room when they went through—kicking his heels moodily against the piano stool. "I've been waiting to speak to you all morning," he told Hilary resentfully, when she had established Nash in his room again, and was going back to the kitchen in search of eggs.

"Have you? Well, I've no time now—I've to get Nash his drink." She was hurrying past.

But Louis stopped her. "When *are* you going to have time for me?" he demanded, stepping directly in front of her and folding his arms with an expression of menace that made her want, hysterically, to laugh.

"For the last four days," he continued. "Ever since Nash has been ill; ever since"—his lowering face darkened still further—"the night Brent delivered his sermon, you've had no time for me. And God knows I've been patient enough! But you're always in a hurry; always something to do—water to heat for Nash, or food to prepare—or drinks to get—for Nash—Nash! Well now," he told her fiercely, "Nash is better. And you've got to find time for me!"

"I *will* find time for you," Hilary said distinctly—"as much time as you want—directly I have finished with this egg-nog. Meanwhile, will you let me pass, Louis, please?"

There was an expression in her eyes that made him stand aside—grudgingly. Hilary had used to say that he ruled her beautifully; Louis, in his black gloom, wondered who she thought was doing the ruling now.

When she came back, and sat down near him, he broke out:

"Harry, you don't know what this is doing to me; I'm crazy. I'm in hell. Oh, I know I never talked to you like

this before, but—you've made me. You've not come near me for days, and—”

“You know the reason for that,” she said, meeting his eyes without self-consciousness; “you've just stated it. Nash—”

“Yes—well, a week ago, you'd have found moments for me if Nash had been *dying!* And it hasn't been Nash who's made you treat me, when you have had to see me, like somebody who's committed murder—who's made you shrink away from me as though I were a leper. It's been Brent.”

“My dear Louis”—that significant possessive, and the disruption it unwittingly indicates!—“I—really, I don't think I've treated you like a leper. I've been very busy, it's true, and—”

“And now you're being insincere, too!” he cried out. “And that, of all things, isn't you. Harry, why won't you come out and admit it: you *don't* feel the same that you did, and Brent's harangue against me, that night, is what's responsible!”

Hilary's hand had gone up to her throat—an invariable gesture when emotion fought with her composure. After a minute, “You are right,” she said. “I've been warding this off—I *have* been insincere. No, Louis, I don't feel as—as I did.”

“Ah!” he exclaimed.

“But I told you,” she added swiftly—“you heard me say—I was going to make it up to Nash.”

“Yes—but Nash doesn't want you to! He told me so, himself; he told that canting Brent so. He promised me he'd persuade you to arrange a divorce—”

Hilary gave a little cry. “*Nash promised you he'd persuade me to!* Louis—Louis!” She was staring at him as at a stranger.

“Well, what's the matter? That morning after Brent had got in his blustering work, I told Nash about it; and I told him what you'd said—about staying with him. Of course he saw the insane sacrifice of it—and for him, too. Hang it, Harry, no man wants a woman round who loves another man.”

“No, I—I suppose not.” Still she

was staring at him. “Nash told me the same thing.”

“You see?” triumphantly. “If”—Louis's brow became a literal thunder-cloud—“if this confounded meddler Brent had kept out of it, everything would have been arranged. Look here, Harry,” persuasively, “you didn't really believe all that cock and bull story Brent told you? About the prison, and things?”

She looked at him directly. “Yes, I did. And so did you—at the time. We believed every word he told us; and I believe it now. If you don't, it's because some stupid notion of jealousy—”

“Ah!” he burst forth. “So you admit there's reason for jealousy! At last we're getting at the truth of things! You're in love with Brent now, and you want—”

“Louis,” she said, in a voice so hushed it was almost as though she looked on someone dead, “that's enough. All that concerns us is that I know *now* that—” An odd sensation came over her; she looked past Louis. Brent was standing in the door.

He had evidently come there that instant; and as instantly went away again. “That I do not love you,” she finished, almost inaudibly, to Louis.

With one bound Louis snatched her to him. “You don't?” he cried. “Say it again—you don't? And you think I'll believe it, after the things you've said, after your coming out here, after the time when you lay in my arms in that chair?”

“Let me go, Louis!”

“Oh, I can talk as well as Brent!” He tightened his hold of her; but—she was almost astonished to find—his magnetism availed nothing. “I've been senselessly restrained all along, but now you'll hear *me!* Eight days ago you loved me enough to leave your husband and the opinion of the rest of the world—for what they were worth—and come to me. I loved you enough to take the responsibility.”

“What responsibility?” she asked, standing as far away from him as his arms would let her. “What responsibility does a man take in such cases? It seems to me it's the woman who—”

"Of course! Brent told you that, too, didn't he? Did he tell you it when he tried to make you keep house with him in Vienna? No, no, Harry, don't look at me like that! I beg your pardon—I had no right to speak that way. Listen."

"If you'll let me sit down, and sit down yourself, I will," she said. "Otherwise all this is only making matters worse—horrible."

"Oh, very well." He released her; and they took their former chairs again.

"When you say 'cases,' Harry, you imply that one has gone through this before. I grant you, most men have. But I—ask anyone in Shanghai, any man—they'll tell you I've never looked at a woman. Oh, of course, Betty"—he flushed slightly; "but you know all about that. For the rest, you're the one woman I've ever wanted, the one woman I've—Harry, I *can't* stay over here. Let me—"

"Wait a moment." The telephone was ringing. She took advantage of its interruption, thankfully. "I'll answer."

"Hello—hello. . . . Yes, this is Mr. Pembroke's; do you wish to speak to Mr. Pembroke? . . . Oh!" The corners of Hilary's mouth curled to a peculiar little smile. "Yes, I'll tell him. Just a moment."

Holding her hand over the transmitter, she turned to Louis. "A young person—I judge that she's young—named Miss Evie Tararra, wants to speak to you. She is here with the Tivoli Opera Company, but she says, 'Mr. Pembroke will know.' I think—our conversation's ended, Louis."

Louis took the receiver from her hand, and banged it down into the catch. But when he turned round, Hilary had vanished.

Nor could he capture her again "to explain." But he, later in the day, explained a few things to Miss Tararra, so emphatically that that young lady—a relic of his Oxford days—pouted: "Don't be fusty, Lou-lou—I won't make myself many, not again."

"No, I rather think you won't," muttered Louis, leaving the telephone. "And I'll have her," he added tempestuously, of Hilary; "I'll have her if I have

to go through hell to get her. Brent sha'n't—"

"Son," Nash, entering the room behind him, said, "a man can't have her if she won't have him. And no man's so big a fool as he who thinks that, because he has her, she'll have him. Remember that," the older man said slowly, "and it'll save you the worst hell you'll ever go through—which is, after you get her."

Louis stalked away without an answer.

"But he'll get over it." Nash looked after him indulgently. Then his face, which had lost several coats of its brown during the last days, grew set. "But Brent won't. And Hal—Lord, why couldn't I have got the bloomin' cholera, anyhow?"

Suddenly a change came over his square features. He sat down quickly on the couch nearby. After an interminable minute, "Why not?" he asked hoarsely—aloud. "Why not?"

IX

He sat there, head between his stocky bent shoulders, for a long time, thinking. What came to him oftenest was that fact of the *Monitor*, his ship, being held in quarantine—for cholera. "Well," he muttered through stiff lips, "there're ways I'd sooner choose, for—divorcin' Hal, but—when a thing offers itself to you by *every* route, and at the same time looks like an accident—"

He sat up slowly, almost painfully. "Doc's worth it," he said; and—to that Someone he had challenged before: "You fixed it up that way. You laid the cards out, thinkin' I'd see the trick. Well—I've seen it, all right. And—I'm going to take you up!"

When Brent found him, a few moments later, he was sitting by the table looking over a bundle of papers. "Say, Doc," he began casually, ignoring Brent's declaration that he should lie down, "I wish you'd try to persuade Hal to take up with this idea of goin' back on the concert stage for a while. Y'see—"

"My dear Comer," returned Brent, sitting down, "what right have I to—"

"Well, you had the right to tell her to stay with me," Nash said bluntly. "'N I don't want her. Understand? You can believe it or not; when you love a woman," he added, with a faint smile at Brent under his mustache, "maybe you *will* understand. It's all right her not staying with Louis—a darn good job I'll say you made of that!—but, just at first anyhow, I'd be a good deal more comfortable if she had somethin' to do that interests her—till she kind o' gets her own ideas straightened out. Now you talk to her. This manager fellow'll be going away before we know it. Get her to sign a contract with him, for a year anyhow."

"But"—Brent was noticeably pale, and rather bewildered—"but what about you?"

"Oh," with an extravagant wave of the hand, "you can't tell what I'll do! I'll be cattle farmin', horse racin', tea growin'—all over the place! At the end of a year," he concluded slowly, "all of us'll know more than we do now."

"Well, if you really want me to, I'll speak to Hilary," said Brent; "but," with a constrained smile, "I'm afraid she thinks I've already interfered rather lavishly in her affairs. Perhaps she won't even listen to me."

Nash looked at him—and again that faint smile came to touch the hidden mouth. "She'll listen to you," he said. "D'you know if she's anywhere about, Doc?"

"She said something a few moments ago about getting dinner; but I think Pembroke's doing it, and—"

"And Hal's not apt to be round where Louis is," Nash chuckled, actually—"not these days. Well, you get Hal and talk to her, and then after dinner I'll go over these business matters with her." He patted the bundle of papers. "There'll be things she'll have to understand if—we're not goin' to be together."

Brent gave a short laugh. "You seem to have no doubt of my success with Hilary," he said, rising.

Nash looked up at him—at the bold, fine-cut features, sharper now than eight

days ago; over all, at the man's stubborn mouth, with its new hint of tenderness. "You'll succeed with her," he said briefly. "So long."

There was only the one room where the two might talk together; so Nash, as he said, cleared out of it.

"Your husband thinks," began Brent, when he and Hilary were seated, "you're being unreasonable."

Hilary fought with her embarrassment—she had not been able to forget the moment of his standing in the door that morning. "Why? Because I won't—marry Louis—or go on the concert stage, to leave him?"

"Not because"—Brent's voice curiously tightened—"you won't marry Pembroke, but—really," he said, trying to put some enthusiasm into his tone, "the concert stage idea is a very good one."

She regarded him disbelievingly. "You don't think so."

"But I do!" he protested quite as much to himself as to her. "When—when I spoke to you before, I didn't take into consideration what I've realized since—what Comer has made me realize," he added hurriedly: "that really it would be pain to a man to have you with him, when he knew—"

"When he knew that I didn't love him? Yes, you've all three told me that today!" flashed Hilary. "Well, since he won't give me the chance to love him, and since both you and he want it so much," she pursued breathlessly, "I'll go on the concert stage—there!"

"Oh, but I don't want it—I mean to say," Brent stammered, "don't let me influence you to that extent. If you think—"

"I'll telephone Mr. Biehler tonight," she went on swiftly, "and I'll make an appointment with him for Monday afternoon—the day we get out. I don't care to discuss it with him over the phone, or I'd—"

"But there's no such great hurry," Brent put in feebly. Really, when Hilary once took hold of a thing—"Take a day or two to think it over; only—"

"John," said she abruptly, "you're an enigma to me. First you tell me to stay

with Nash—you show me where I've been criminally heartless in thinking of leaving Nash; then you tell me it would be worse still for Nash to have me with him; now—that I'd much better go back on the concert stage; and *then* you say, no don't do anything—think it over. Now what do you mean?"

"I'm an enigma to myself, Hilary," he said, looking straight into her eyes, and speaking decisively enough now. "I don't know what I mean. But perhaps," he added desperately, "if you have made up your mind, you'd better go on with the concert stage."

"Very well," she said, in a hard little voice, "I will. Only"—the voice broke then, and sounded very suspiciously close to tears—"if you think I *want* to go back to being a public person—if you think I *want* to be battered round the earth alone again—"

"By the Lord, yes!" Brent almost shouted, hotly. "Why didn't Comer think of that?"

"Why didn't *you* think of it?" she demanded, finding her handkerchief. "He's hardly said a word to me; it's *you* who—who"—she wiped away two great tears—"are *pushing me out!*"

"Oh, Lord!" At sight of her tears, at sound of the quivering childlike voice—childlike again now—Brent had walked as far to the other end of the room as he could go. "Hilary," he said in a tight, unnatural tone, "I'm a brute and a beast, and—if you'll only do exactly what you want to do, I'll be the happiest man on earth!"

"Why"—the handkerchief came down, and Hilary's absurd little nose wrinkled up in its old perplexed fashion—"that's just what Nash—oh!" Remembering in what connection Nash had said it, a tide of red surged over her face—all the way to the white throat.

Brent saw it; divined, too, some of the significance of the unfinished words; and striding back to her across the room, said harshly: "Yes—it's true. Think what you like of me. You can't think worse than I think of myself."

But the warm color had faded; Hilary held out her hand. "I only think, John," she said, meeting his look steadily,

though her voice had a little quaver in it, "that you're the finest man I know."

He gripped the hand inarticulately.

"We-ell," said Nash from the door, "I see you've persuaded her."

The hands of the two fell apart. "Yes," said Hilary faintly. Brent fled. As Nash came on into the room and sat down, his wife suddenly rushed to him and threw herself into his arms. "Oh, Nash—Nash!" she cried heartbrokenly, in a passion of tears.

"Yes, honey, yes—there!" He rocked her tenderly, yearningly touching her hair. "I know—it's been a rocky hard fight for you; and now that you've made your decision, now that you know yourself, it just breaks you up. You go on and cry, honey. Lord," said Nash unsteadily, "I'd like to cry m'self."

She buried her head deeper against his breast, and sobbed—but more quietly now. It was upon this tableau that Louis entered to ask, "Will you come to dinner?" He interrupted Nash Comer's moment of purest bliss, and most unutterable anguish.

Hilary kept her word, and telephoned Biehler; and afterward, when Brent and Louis had gone across to inquire about Ping, listened with what composure she could muster, while Nash explained stocks and bonds to her, and instructed her in the management of what would be hers. It seemed a great deal.

"Aren't you giving me everything?" she asked tremulously. Somehow, though she kept telling herself it was only for a year—just a year's experiment—the scene they were going through seemed terrible to her. Her own bland selfishness, as Brent had called it, in the past, Nash's inordinate generosity—"Oh, I can't think all this is right!" she added passionately. "Something—it seems to me so *final*, so—so horrible."

Nash was folding papers, with his back to her. "Now don't you fret, Hal," he said; "everything's coming out all right, and in the very best way for—everybody." He turned then, and smiled at her; but his smile seemed to her the most terrible of all.

"Listen," she said quickly; "it isn't too late to stop this thing yet—nothing's

really been done. I can make an excuse to Mr. Biehler, and—”

Nash shook his head. “No. Please, Hal,” he said to her suddenly almost with violence, “won’t you do this for me—carry this through as we’ve planned? Won’t you help me that much?”

She met his eyes. Something in them that she did not understand made her say: “Why, of course, Nash, if you wish it.”

“That’s right!” He drew a great breath of relief. “Now I’m going to say good night; you’ve had a hard day, and—”

“And you ought to be in bed, this minute, yourself,” she returned swiftly.

“Good night, my dear.” He took her face between his hands, and for the first time since they had met at Louis’s, kissed her. “I—” He began to say something more, stopped, and pushed her gently from him toward the door.

When she had gone, he placed the bundle of papers in an envelope, directed them in her name, sealed the envelope, and left it with obvious carelessness on the table. Then he opened the veranda door and went out.

Since Ping was so much better, the nurse took a walk in the evening—on the other side of the line, of course; Nash could see his white figure against the blackness of the night—far to one end of the place. Ping had a whistle with which to call him. Nash listened: evidently, since Brent and Louis found they must wait for Li to return, they had decided to walk, too, meanwhile—as a matter of fact, Brent had decided, and pulled Louis with him, knowing that Nash and Hilary wanted the living room. From the end of the long drive came their voices in disjointed conversation.

It was what Nash had hoped for. He looked at the broad chalk line gleaming ahead in the darkness; and then, without a backward glance, began to walk straight toward it.

A moment later a shrill whistle rent the stillness. Brent and Louis turned, with lightning swiftness, in the direction of the house. “My God!” cried Louis. “Look there!”

Out of the black, a thin tongue of flame was seen creeping up the window of Ping’s cottage. Both men tore into a run. But they were almost an eighth of a mile off; the flame flared higher, and brighter—it had caught the light bamboo curtain. Then suddenly it went out. And as Louis, panting, pulled up first before the line, on the other side of it appeared—Nash Comer.

His hands were burnt, but he seemed unconscious of them. His face, under the one lantern in the passage, was supremely calm. “It’s all right, Louis,” he said—Louis was staring, ashen with horror. “I touched him—I had to; his shirt was afire. Now—you let Doc tell Hal, will you? Louis, you turn Hal over to Doc.”

Brent, arriving at that moment, gasped out thickly: “Comer—you! What in the name of God are you—” He started blindly to rush across the line.

But there darted between him and it a white figure. And when he looked up, he saw forbidding him the stolid impassivity of a Chinaman, standing behind the line with his arms crossed.

X

“WHAT I never shall understand,” said Brent, for the hundredth time, “is how that fire broke out.”

They were sitting, he and Louis, in the denuded living room—which, stripped of its cushions and pictures, books, music, everything—had something of the stark dignity of a vast skeleton. The smell of chloride and carbolic was everywhere; for quarantine was declared lifted, and the process of disinfecting had been drastic and exhaustive. The day before they had buried Nash.

“It’d be easy enough,” Brent went on, “if the candle had been nearer the bed; but Li says it was at least three feet away, and he doesn’t see how Ping could have reached it without getting out of bed.”

“Well,” said Louis, “he’s obstinate in declaring he did—that he turned over quickly, and the next minute saw that his shirt was afire. Funny thing, though,

that he didn't whistle for a good three minutes after—and meantime Nash had seen the blaze."

"Humph!" Brent returned impatiently. "Well, it's a mystery. All we know of it actually is that Ping was saved, and Comer—" He broke off, with Comer's own brusqueness.

Louis got up nervously, and suggested: "By the bye, Li says Ping's dressed and presentable, and wants to report before you go. Rum little yellow-face, I wonder what he's up to now?"

"Probably some idea of apologizing for getting his life saved." Brent laughed shortly. "It's Hilary he wants to see, I suppose."

"No—Li said all three of us. Jove!" Louis exclaimed under his breath. "I hope it won't upset her—Harry; since that one collapse just at first, she's been the pluckiest little creature! And for Nash to die like that!" A nicely curbed resentment against Nash for dying like that crept into Louis's tone. "Even though she didn't love him—"

It evidently occurred to him suddenly that he was rambling on rather too intimately with the enemy; for all at once he stopped—and strode over to Brent.

"But don't you think I mean to give her up!" he told him passionately. "She can go to England to see her people—she can go to New South Wales; but I'll—"

"I am sure you will," Brent said coldly. "Only why tell me about it?"

"To warn you not to be too sure," returned Louis, with an ugly scowl, "that's all. You played that trick of swinging her back to Nash very prettily; but just because Nash happened to die—"

"H'm—it was odd, wasn't it, that just before he 'happened' to die, he had turned over to Hilary every security he owned!"

"Now what are you trying to prove?" Louis burst forth. "Why shouldn't he turn everything over to her? She was going off alone—he and you had made her promise to go—and he could have made as much money again in a month.

He had the devil's own luck. Why shouldn't he—"

"I merely said it was odd. And that Li should have found one of those short matches Comer used outside Ping's window—when Comer had gone over there to *put out* the fire."

"Look here, Brent"—Louis came still closer to him and looked down at him furiously—"if you're trying to frame up a story that Nash Comer—why, everybody knows—Harry knows—all Shanghai knows—that Nash died through rushing to save a man whom he knew to be helpless, in the midst of fire; any man who was a man would have done the same."

"And not necessarily paid for it with his life," said Brent thoughtfully, entirely ignoring the other's exasperation. "The question of surviving an attack of cholera is almost entirely a question of power of endurance. Comer had none; and—he knew it. During that attack of bronchitis I'd told him so twenty times."

"Well—well? What's that got to do with it? Look here, you've gone pretty far, and pulled it off—with Harry; but I swear, if you try to turn her away from me, and to push your own ends still further by suggesting that Nash—"

"That Nash what?" asked Hilary, coming into the room. She may have been plucky, but her voice shook even now when she spoke her husband's name; she may not have loved him, but she certainly did not love the man to whom she now spoke with instinctive combativeness.

"Nothing," muttered Louis, moving away from Brent. "Dr. Brent and I have merely been having a—little farewell understanding. Er—won't you sit down?"

"Thanks." Hilary took the chair he drew up for her—the chair farthest away from Brent. She was not in black, but in her favorite soft white gown, and a little simple white hat. Yet in spite of it she looked older; and her speech lagged, as though constantly held back by some all-possessing, preoccupying thought.

"Well?" Brent's attempt at briskness

was rather a failure. "Are you quite ready?"

"Yes." She turned to him with the vague satisfaction of a weary child to someone who unconsciously rests it. "Everything is done, everything. Do you know," she broke off unsteadily, "I saw Li just now, erasing the—line. Oh, I don't want to be hysterical—when *he* showed such iron courage, I don't want to be a coward—but—"

She got up and walked over to the long windows, her lip trembling uncontrollably. After a moment, "It's all right," she said, with a long, difficult breath. "I'll carry this through. I'll go to England and see my people, just at first; and then—I'll keep my promise to Nash. It was the one promise he ever asked of me—or that I ever made him. I'll go back to work, as he was sure would be best for me—for a year. After that—"

"Yes? After that?" It was Louis who echoed the pregnant question; yet Brent felt as though she must hear him fairly shouting it through the empty room.

"He said," Hilary went on slowly, "'at the end of a year we'll all know more than we do now.' Oh, it seems as though he must have known—all through the evening I felt something sinister—terrible; it seems as though—"

"Nonsense, Harry!" Louis flashed a threatening glance at Brent—who said nothing. "It was a horrible accident, the way Nash died. He saw the flame; he realized Ping was in fatal danger; he dashed across the line: it was one of those instant, instinctive—"

"Please, seh, Misteh Louis, can do inside?" At the door appeared a small deprecating Chinaman, newly soaped and starched, and regarding the three Europeans with the nearest approach to interest that two beady eyes plus illimitable shiny blue linen can convey.

"Oh, hello, Ping!" Louis glared at the insignificant yellow creature who had balked him of his great desire. "Yes, come in—say what you've got to say."

"How do you do, Ping?" As the little man in so much clean clothes advanced into the room, Hilary went for-

ward and looked at him, long—unreadably.

The beady black eyes gazed back, without blinking. "How do, missee? Missee Comeh think velly bad thoughts this boy Ping—missee think he killee husband."

"Oh, no, Ping!" No, no—I am proud, very proud, that—my husband saved you." Hilary gave the "boy" another long look, and then abruptly turned away—to sit down beside Brent.

"Yes—he save me—Misteh Comeh!" Something in the monotonous Chinese voice made the boy's master look up sharply.

"Here, Ping—if you've anything to say, get on with it. Mrs. Comer is waiting for you."

"Yessuh. Me gotchee plentee say; me velly flightened Chinese gods. Gods come one, two, three nights; gods say—"

"There, that'll do for the gods. Hurry up."

"Yessuh. Gods say: 'Ping Min Hu, you been velly sick man. Gods lettee you get well; now you tellee velly wicked lie—'"

"What lie?" bolted Brent involuntarily. Hilary, too, sat forward, very pale.

"You no tellee thuth, you velly soon die again,' gods say," pursued the Chinaman immovably. "Me plomise gods tellee thuth. List-en: me sleep in bed; Li Chan Wu walkee walkee far-side outside. Me wakee up. Misteh Comeh, he lookee me velly fiehce; he tellee me: 'You makee one piece scleam, me killee you *quick*.' He say: 'You keep velly still, you allight.'"

There was the silence of death in the room. Only Hilary, unconsciously, had moved closer to Brent. Louis was white as her gown.

"Misteh Comeh stlike match, makee fi-eh—"

"A-ah!" Hilary clapped her hand over her mouth.

"He makee fi-eh my shirt. Me keeppee velly still; fieh go quick out. He makee 'notheh fieh allee same bamboo cultain. Fieh velly blight, but no can do velly big; he puttee out—his hands."

"My God!" muttered Louis. "This is impossible!"

"Me tellee tluth. He say: 'You no tellee you makee fieh, me killee you al-light; you tellee tluth, me allee same dead, me send wicked spilits cut you twentee hundred pieces.' Me no can help. Me mo' frightened Chinese gods than Misteh Comeh wicked spilits. Afteh he puttee out fieh, Misteh Comeh he blow whist-le. Most noble gods"—the man lapsed suddenly into Chinese—"this is the truth!"

He made an odd and very deep reverence and noiselessly went out.

Always there was that deathly silence. Louis took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead. He did not look at Brent. Then Hilary, in a dry, strained voice, said: "*He lit the fire. He blew the whistle. Oh, John, John—he lit that fire himself!*"

She fell toward Brent in a dead faint.

He caught her. Louis hastened for brandy. Then, when Brent was forcing it gently through her lips, Louis said:

"I—I'm going to obey his order—Nash's order, at last. When I pulled up there, before the line, he told me: 'Let Doc tell Hal. You turn Hal over to Doc.' I—will do it, Brent."

Hilary, opening her eyes, saw the two men clasp hands, and look hard into each other's face. Then Louis was gone.

"It's true," she remembered—forgetting them both: "*he lit that fire himself. Nash lit that fire himself. And I'm still alive, I!*" A dry sob caught her voice—a sob of scorn. "But of course I'd be alive, I'd come out safely, guarded and shielded and given the best there was; while Nash"—the look she fixed on Brent made him turn away his eyes—"Nash even had to die—alone."

"Yes, Hilary." Brent leaned over her, speaking huskily. "But remember, he chose to die alone. I think that makes it—somehow not more awful, but less: that it wasn't, as Pembroke said, a horrible accident, but the supreme act of a life made up of splendid acts. It tortures you, because you feel it one more—and the most dreadful—sacrifice for you; but to him, as everything that he did for you was to him natural and a joy, it must have been the greatest joy—or he wouldn't have done it."

She was sitting up—and gazing at him. "You—think that? But I know you do—you'd not insult me with kind fabrication. And—it was odd—you always knew him better than any of us. Perhaps"—even with the faint admission, her face grew less drawn—"perhaps you're right."

"I'm *sure* I am," he said firmly. "And sure, too, that the last thing he would have wished would have been for you to find him out in that final generosity for you—the first thing he'd ask now, for you to forget it. Won't you—will you try?"

He lifted her up, and straightened her little hat. She continued to gaze at him, with that struggling of bitterness and belief in what he said. "I *will* try," she said finally; "yes, John."

"Then you must, first, come away from here. The carriage is down at the gate waiting. Come."

"Yes—when I have said good-bye to Louis."

She left him. And found Louis—standing at the door of a room that he had just unlocked. When she saw what it was—"Don't, don't!" she cried, turning away.

But he took her arm and led her in. "It's not the white room I want to show you," he said in an odd, light voice; "it's this."

The room in its pure peace was unaltered. Louis had made the men leave it till the last. But on the tabouret, to which he had led her, the red roses—

"I know a little verse," he said unsteadily—"perhaps you know it, too. It's from the Arabic:

"Unto the end: through a thousand kisses,
A thousand caresses, a thousand pains;
Till the roses of passion have lost their petals,
And nought but the perfume remains."

He lifted up a handful of the brown rose leaves, and the subtle fragrance of them filled the air. Hilary, with a quick little breath, lifted some, too. And even in the agony of the new revelation, she smiled—with singular sweetness.

"There *is* the perfume, Louis," she said softly; "there always will be."

And standing within its fine delicacy, she kissed him.

Then he took her out and gave her to Brent. The three stood together on the threshold of the place for an instant. The chalk line that man had drawn for his own protection was gone, with the going of the treacherous disease. There lay the broad pathway, open and free and bathed in sun, leading to the road. Brent and Hilary went down it, without looking back.

And Louis was left alone, gazing at his big rifled room, companioned only

by the stillness of his empty house. He sank into a chair and buried his face. Then—it came to him then that he was free, too—to go down that sunny pathway, to find the world. He snatched his hat, and started off at a run.

Where was he going first? The thought came to him as he tore down the path. And with that he paused. Then, breaking into a run again, "H'm," he decided, "think I'll go and find out if Betty *is* engaged!"



CHALLENGE

By John Hall Wheelock

ALL honey and gold your body is, of fashion
 Lovely and liberal, in a world of sadness
 Blaring the old and the barbaric gladness,
 The ruddy joy, the bounteous compassion.

Her beauty's challenge, like gold trumps of warning
 Blown from the throne of God with royal splendor,
 Summons to love—the eloquent and tender
 Lines of her grace unfolded like the morning.

Ever she sounds, with royal reverberation
 Of ringing pulses and rhythm of grace supernal,
 The call to joy amid the doom eternal,
 The golden words of the great invitation.



FROM THE JOURNAL OF MME. LÉANDRE

By Helen Woljeska

WOMAN'S art is but a makeshift—the act of expressing on paper or canvas the moods and emotions she dares not express in her own life.

Men know the luxury of pleasure—as women know the sensuousness of grief.

There are seasons of unrest and unbalance in every woman's life. During those periods the ordinary woman frets and fumes—the wise woman keeps herself in silence and seclusion—and the "artistic" woman changes lovers.

A SPRING AFTERNOON

By Louis Untermeyer

THE world's running over with laughter,
With whispers, strange fervors and April—
There's a smell in the air as if meadows
Were under our feet.

Spring smiles at the commonest waysides,
But she pours out her heart to the city;
As one woman might to another,
Who meet after years . . .

Restless with color and perfume,
The streets are a riot of blossoms—
What garden could boast of such flowers?
Not Eden itself.

Primroses, pinks and gardenias
Shame the gray town and its squalor—
Windows are flaming with jonquils,
Fires of gold!

Out of a florist's some pansies
Peer at the crowd, like the faces
Of solemnly mischievous children
Going to bed . . .

And women—Spring's favorite children;
Frail and phantastically fashioned—
Pass like a race of immortals,
Too radiant for earth.

The pale and the drab are transfigured;
They sing themselves into the sunshine—
Every girl is a lyric,
An urge and a lure!

And, like a challenge of trumpets,
The Spring and its impulse goes through me—
Breezes and flowers and people
Sing in my blood . . .

Breezes and flowers and people—
And under it all, oh, beloved,
Out of the song and the sunshine,
Rises your face!

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

A LITANY: CANTO IV.

From ward heelers, and from blond mustaches; from adenoids, and from bar checks; from billboards, and from "David Copperfield"; from chewing gum, and from arithmetic; from "The Rosary," and from vertigo; from singing canary birds, and from *bierbässe*, from witch-hazel, and from cornet solos; from patent leather shoes in the morning, and from local option; from parades, and from gas bills; from the philosophy of Bergson, and from cold dinner plates; from black mittens, and from soft drinks; from emetics, and from funerals; from loose bricks, and from transcendentalism; from Key West cigars, and from ocean voyages; from Chopin, and from evangelists—good Lord deliver us!



SAMPLE PROGRAM of a woman's club meeting ten years ago:

1. "The Genius of Richard Harding Davis."
2. "How to Understand 'Lohengrin.'"
3. "Milton, Goethe and Henry Van Dyke."
4. "Recent Advances in Infant Feeding."

SAMPLE PROGRAM of a woman's club meeting today:

1. "Tricks of White Slave Traders."
2. "Should a Divorced Husband Be Forced to Take the Children?"
3. Readings from Wedekind's "The Awakening of Spring."
4. "Surgical Interference as a Moral Agent."

IMPRESSIONS OF GREATNESS:

MUNSEY—An exclamation point in a dress suit . . . an eel climbing a greased pole.

COMSTOCK—A pair of pajamas at half-mast.

LINK STEFFENS—A healed boil—a "prop" bomb.

HUBBARD—Vespers in a brothel . . . Robert G. Ingersoll as a sandwich man . . . music by Theodore Moses-Tobani.

LYMAN ABBOTT—Alfalfa by moonlight . . . a disembowelled sofa pillow.

THE ELOQUENT AMERICAN LANGUAGE:

I never seen nothing I would of rather saw.

I usen't to like olives, but them times ain't no more.

THE verdict of a jury is the opinion of that juror who most needs a bath.

AFTER all, which is worse: a mental healer or a ward heeler?

ALL men may be divided into two classes: those who like vaudeville and those who can stand it when they are drunk.

PURITANISM—An attempt to repeal physiology.

EXPERIMENTS IN PHRASING:

The sort of woman who knows waiters . . .

The great and ammoniacal masses of the plain people . . .

What may be called the athletic side of marriage . . .



SOME WORSTS:

The worst drink—American beer.

The worst food—Oyster pâté.

The worst musical instrument—The cornet.

The worst play—“King Lear.”

The worst book—“Leviticus.”

The worst theory—Eugenics.

The worst opera—“Faust.”

The worst habit—Going to church.

The worst humorist—Owen Hatteras.



USELESS THINGS:

Bar rails.

Sideburns.

Nightshirts.

Funerals.

Eunuchs.

Opera librettos.

De luxe editions.

Stickpins.

Archdeacons.

Love.



MARITAL ATTITUDES:

THE WIFE—Thank God!

THE HUSBAND—Oh, God!



MANUSCRIPTS REJECTED UNREAD:

“Why Society Girls Marry Chauffeurs.”

“Her Knee.”

“The Glories of Gomorrah.”



AN ounce of convention is worth a pound of cure.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW ORDERS:

The Jolly Brotherhood of Honorary Pallbearers.

The Despondent Sorority of Esoteric Virgins.

The Fascinating Order of Gesticulating Gentlemen.

The Perfumed Knights of the Macaroon.

The Caparisoned Worshipers of Mystic Flubdub.

The Knights-in-Waiting of the Gold-Rimmed Stein.

The Ultimate Mullahs of Filigreed Flapdoodle.

The Sweating Swashbucklers of the Swastika.

The Valiant Vermin of the Radiant Rat.

The Liquorish Louts of Hideous Hieroglyphics.

The B. U. G. S.

The Mysterious Brotherhood of the Epileptic Handshake.



AMENDMENTS:

FIDELITY—A negative virtue of the timid and the senile.

VICE CRUSADER—A person content with secondhand thrills.

SIN—An exclusive pleasure for the few who have rid themselves of the superstitions of the many.

TELEPATHIST—A creative artist.

MARRIAGE—A surprise to the woman and a disappointment to the man—or vice versa.

SUICIDE—A belated acquiescence in the opinion of one's wife's relatives.

RESTAURATEUR—Any saloonkeeper who wears his Sunday clothes all week.

JAG—The reward of industry.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM for a Popular Concert:

I

1. Narcissus.....Nevin
2. Hungarian Dances, Nos. 6 and 7
Brahms
3. Hearts and Flowers.....Tobani
4. Second Hungarian Rhapsody...Liszt
5. Silver Threads Among the Gold.
6. Pilgrims' Chorus.....Wagner

II

1. "William Tell" Overture....Bellini
2. Old Oaken Bucket.
3. Good-bye.....Tosti
4. Nocturne, E flat Major.....Chopin
5. Sextette from "Lucia"....Donizetti
6. Humoreske.....Dvorak
7. Stars and Stripes Forever.....Sousa

ENCORES.

The Rosary.....Nevin
Turkey in the Straw.
Barcarole from "Hoffmann" ..Offenbach

MARRIAGE: Psychic exhaustion.
DIVORCE: Second wind.

A MAN'S belief in his soul is in direct ratio to his inability to enjoy life.

THE supreme test of physical fortitude: To kiss a lady doctor.

THE secret of George Bernard Shaw: To put the obvious in terms of the scandalous.

HELL—The land of the Free and the home of the Brave.

THE TWENTY GREATEST AMERICANS:

Dr. Harvey H. Crippen.
Dr. Sylvanus Stall.
Dr. Munyon.
William Winter.
Sitting Bull.
Jacob H. Schiff.
John McNamara.
Orison Swett Marden.
Herbert Kaufman.
Harry Von Tilzer.
Jack Johnson.
J. Gordon Cooglar.
Nat Goodwin.
Tod Sloan.
Melville Ellis.
Benedict Arnold.
William H. Lorimer.
Elijah Dowie.
Harry Lehr.
Gen. Tom Thumb.

DEMOCRACY—The theory that two thieves will steal less than one.

No doubt the Greek temple that they are going to rear to old Abe Lincoln at Washington will be a great deal more beautiful, viewed from without, than ever Abe was himself. He did not run to grace and symmetry. He had no Corinthian columns in front of him, no smooth abacus to rest his chin upon; his feet were not sculptured Doric plinths; he wore no chiseled hypotrachelli around his equator. No; Abe was no male Venus, no masterpiece of the barbers, no hero for a best seller. He ran not to curves, but to warts; he was hairy, horrible, human.

Thus in outward guise the monument will shame the man, a consummation not new in the world. But what about its insides, its interior? What is to be put in it? Is it to be given over to postcard stalls and soda water stands? Is it to be infested, as the shaft to Washington was for many years, by peddlers selling bogus souvenirs—chunks of marble, condemned doorknobs, bones, and

caricatures of Abe? Are honeymooners to lurk there, swapping gurgles in its shadows? Or is it to be made a public hall, abandoned to the hair-pullings of the Daughters of the Revolution, the solemn synods of the Sons of the Signers, the donkeyish palavers of other such fantastic fowl? Or is it, finally, to be a mere corral and roosting place for job holders—prominent colored Republicans from Alabama, professional veterans with tassels on their hats?

Let us hope not. The Century Dictionary defines "temple" as "an edifice erected as a place of public worship, a church." In New York, true enough, a Doric temple is used as a savings bank, and in Chicago, so I hear, there is one that houses a Turkish bath—but New York and Chicago, perhaps, are not quite civilized. In Washington, the capital of the nation, a better sense of fitness must prevail. The Lincoln temple must be a genuine temple, and not a mere booth for money changers. It must be actually "a place of public worship, a church."

But the United States has no religion, at least no national religion? Bosh! It has fully a hundred and fifty. Every alert American tries at least two of them. And during the past century the country has produced more than fifty, including three of the very first rank—three completely novel systems of theology, unknown to the world before. Why not have three chapels in the temple, testifying thus to our national toleration, and dedicate one to each of these revolutionary, unprecedented and peculiarly American faiths? Why not throw a challenge to Rome, Moscow, Benares, Canterbury, Constantinople, Mecca, Jerusalem? Why not show that we, too, have produced our Mohammeds and Moseses, that we, too, have tickets to heaven to sell?

But what are these American faiths, novel, epoch-making and racy of the soil? Alas that I must answer! Alas that you do not know! Alas that there is so little public reverence for Mormonism, Dowieism and Eddyism!



UNION SQUARE

By Witter Bynner

TWO hags were huddled side by side
 At dawn, in Union Square,
 Corrupt and silent. One had died;
 The other waited there.

One lay upon the bench, at rest
 From her nocturnal beat,
 Newspapers round her face and breast,
 Her bonnet at her feet.

The other—sunken was her head,
 Her smile was drunk and dreary—
 Not even knowing what she said,
 Called to me: "Hullo, dearie!"

THE LABORATORY

By Ludwig Lewisohn

UNDER a granite arch I stood,
And gazed into a high, clear hall,
Where marble, steel and burnished wood,
And broad expanse of stainless wall
Guard no ignoble fortitude
Of spirit; earnest and severe
The energy abiding here—
Cold, passionless, majestical.

Without the wild trees shook their manes,
But this house, founded on a rock,
Stood tremorless beneath the shock
Of the imperious storm that hurled
Its thunder at the blinded panes
And battled in the streaming world.

I saw dim vials, lustrous grass,
And strange, dead flesh hid under glass;
Transparent bodies which the tide
Casts forth in shells phantastical;
And heard, slow rising at my side,
The resonant voice that mastered all:
“Behold, the universe is one;
In ages, measurelessly far,
Amid warm vapors of this star
And vibrant terrors of the sun,
Under some glowing rock of wall,
In ooze of the primordial sea,
Arose the cell that was to be
The blood, the life, the lord of all.
Immortal, incorruptible
That Essence, myriad-fold of shape:
A bubble in a starry shell,
A condor on the lonely peaks,
Amid huge foliage the dark ape,
A thousand tusks and claws and beaks,
Black wings that bar the yellow moon,
And writhing monsters, dim and large,
Prone in the slime upon the marge
Of reedy river and lagoon.
Immortal and unchanging still
That Essence; its the cunning hand

THE SMART SET

That grooved the brain and shaped the will,
 Built huts beneath the swinging trees,
 And from the tawny morning strand
 Launched barks on the unfurrowed seas.
 The fugitive gods are dead. Serene
 And steadfast the unshadowed mind
 Triumphs above the ancient, blind
 Sorrows, the yearnings that have been;
 Untroubled henceforth, for it knows
 Nature, from whose great lap it rose,
 Trampling the caveman's cowering awe
 In gleams of a miraculous sun,
 Seeing the universe is one
 And strife and death the eternal law.”

II

The wind fell and the world was still,
 And the trees quiet in the chill
 Desolateness. The heart in me
 Withered as is the pallid grass
 Over which sullen waters pass,
 Far off, of an invading sea.
 Then slowly from the twilight came
 The radiance of a heatless flame,
 In which the haggard walls dislimned.
 And I beheld with eyes undimmed
 As the great flame waxed white and spread
 The abiding glories that have been,
 The proud, imperishable dead,
 And life itself come streaming in.

I saw a golden desert slant
 Against a boundlessness of blue,
 And tall, white figures travel through
 The blaze—grave men and vigilant.
 Gently the mellow evening fell.
 The slim palms waved beside a well,
 The travelers ate the beaten grain,
 Then read the fate of heavenly wars
 In star dust and in meteors.
 And when the silver night was gone
 They wrestled with a King of Kings,
 And held immortal traffickings
 With angels in the hush of dawn.
 I saw curved hills in a clear air,
 Hills rosy and marmoreal;
 A thousand faces, tense and fair,
 Clustered on cliff and peak and wall.
 And there was silence in the sky,
 And silence on all tongues. Then one,
 Tall and adorned heroically,
 Stepped out into the lucent sun.

A solitary voice arose,
Chanting the unforgotten woes
Of the world's youth. Austere and free
Of glory and doom the singer sang,
The Sophoclean music rang
Chainless unto the chainless sea.

I heard the bacchic timbrels boom
In madness through the palace gloom;
On marble saw the red wine foam
From beakers held in fevered hands,
Where reigned above the dying lands
The rose of revelry at Rome.
I saw a white girl stand before
The passion of an emperor,
Then turn and flee—down corridor,
And gate, by Tiber, through the vast
Tumult of misery and mirth,
By noisome taverns of the street,
Into the chambers of the earth,
And low her fragrant body cast
And kiss a scrawl of Bleeding Feet.

I saw a city's purple towers
Dark against burnished bars of cloud,
And all the streets and squares were loud
With music through the floral hours.
Among the lilies wandered priests,
Bearing aloft great eucharists
In which the sunset flashed and flamed,
And on all lips one name was named
With singing. And the minster tolled
The *Ave* from its throat of gold,
Peace was upon the wine-dark sea,
Peace on that city's quays and marts,
For Christ who walked in Galilee
Had risen in a thousand hearts.

The vision deepened, trembled, spread.
O human life, strange and divine,
Rising beyond thine oil and bread,
Breathing thy transitory breath
In love that is more strong than death,
Making the constellations thine—
And rising from the whelming seas
Triumphant. Beautiful agonies,
Immortal heartbreaks, hope and strength
Are thine, till thou attain at length
Milton in darkness, Beethoven
In silence. For these, too, were men.
Oh, from the mountains and the gloom
Of India where the ages wait,
To where the Western ocean's spume

THE SMART SET

Curls white beyond the Golden Gate,
 Are husbandmen against late skies,
 And traders in immortal wares,
 And golden grain among the tares,
 And women with wives' and mothers' eyes,
 And dreamers in the sounding street,
 Who dream in steel and stone and song,
 And pilgrims who, on tireless feet,
 Battle with everlasting wrong.
 And all hearts by one woe are riven,
 And all souls by one fever driven:
 The exiles of mortality
 Strive heavenward over land and sea—
 Under the scorpion and the rod,
 Through storm and terror and despair,
 They forge the reaches of the stair
 That mount unto the feet of God.

III

The flame failed and the vision. Damp
 The long hall. But one ruddy lamp
 Near by swung dizzily and low.
 He who had put the gods to flight
 Stood calmly in the somber glow;
 Him, too, the vision visited,
 But in his eyes there was no light.
 And a voice, mine, yet not mine, said:
 "You have seen, and having seen, no awe
 Is in you. Still you crave the law.
 No law there is but that which men
 Fling on the wild, strange universe
 To draw it nearer to their ken:
 The law that curbs the poet's verse,
 The law that is man's slave, not lord,
 The law which is the soul's decree
 That star and mountain, storm and sea
 Shall crash as rhythmic chord on chord
 In its abiding harmony.
 Vision for vision: ah, which sings
 The music of the cosmic rune—
 Primeval claws and tusks and wings,
 Or that broad glory of earth's noon
 When, in their beauty, seers and kings
 Bring home the spirit's harvesting?"

My way was free. The winds had driven
 The cloudwrack from the liquid heaven.
 The dear, familiar world stretched far
 Before me, and the peace of God
 Brooded above it as I trod
 Serene, under the evening star.

BALTHAZAR'S DAUGHTER

By James Branch Cabell

GRACIOSA was Balthazar's youngest child, a white, slim girl with violet eyes and strange pale hair which had the color and glitter of stardust. "Some day at court," her father often thought complacently, "she, too, will make a good match." He was a necessitous lord, a smiling, supple man who had already marketed two daughters to his advantage. But Graciosa's time was not yet mature, for the girl was not quite eighteen. So Graciosa remained in his big cheerless house and was tutored in all needful accomplishments.

Now to the north of Balthazar's home stood a tall forest overhanging both the highway and the river whose windings the highway followed. Graciosa was very often to be encountered upon the outskirts of these woods. She loved the forest, whose tranquillity bred dreams, but was already a woman in so far that she found it more interesting to watch the highway.

Then destiny took a hand in the affair and Guido came. He reined in his gray horse at the sight of her sitting by the wayside and deferentially inquired how far it might be to the nearest inn. Graciosa told him. He thanked her and rode on. That was all, but the appraising glance of this sedate and handsome burgher obscurely troubled the girl afterward.

Next day he came again. He was a jewel merchant, he told her, and he thought it within the stretch of possibility that my lord Balthazar's daughter might wish to purchase some of his wares. She viewed them with admiration, chaffered thriftily, and finally bought a topaz, dug from Mount

Zabarca, Guido assured her, which rendered its wearer immune to terrors of any kind.

Very often afterward these two met on the outskirts of the forest as Guido rode between the coast and the hill country about his vocation. Sometimes he laughingly offered her a bargain; on other days he paused to exhibit a notable gem which he had procured for this or that wealthy amateur. Count Eglamour, the young Duke's favorite yonder at court, bought most of them, it seemed. "The nobles complain against this upstart Eglamour very bitterly," said Guido, "but we merchants have no quarrel with him. He buys too lavishly. Eh, mistress, I wish that you could see his gems," cried Guido, growing fervent; and he lovingly catalogued a host of lapidary marvels.

"I fear I shall not see these jewels when I go to court," said Graciosa, rather wistfully, "for by that time, my father assures me, some honest gentleman will have contrived to cut the throat of this abominable Eglamour, and his collection of gems will be scattered." Her father's people, it should be premised, had been at bitter feud with the favorite ever since he detected and punished the conspiracy of the Marquis of Cibo, their kinsman. Then Graciosa continued: "Nevertheless, I shall see many beautiful sights when I am taken to court. And the Duke, too, you tell me, is a lover of gems?"

"Duke Alessandro," he returned, his dark eyes strangely mirthful, "is, as I take it, a catholic lover of beauty in all its forms."

"And is he as handsome as people report?"

Then Guido laughed a little. "Tastes differ, of course. But I think your father will assure you, mistress, that no duke possessing such a zealous tax collector as Count Eglamour was ever in his lifetime considered of repulsive person."

"And he is young?"

"Why, as to that, he is about of an age with me, and in consequence old enough to be far more sensible than either of us is ever likely to be," said Guido, and began to talk of other matters.

But presently Graciosa was questioning him again as to the court whither she was to go next year and enslave a marquis or, at worst, an opulent baron. Her thoughts turned toward the court's predominating figure. "Tell me of Eglamour, Guido."

"Mistress, some say that Eglamour was a brewer's son. Others—and your father's kinsmen in particular—insist that he was begot by Satan in person, just as Merlin was. Nobody knows anything about his origin." Guido was sitting upon the ground, his open pack between his knees. Between the thumb and forefinger of each hand he held caressingly a string of pearls which he inspected as he talked. "Nobody," he idly said—"nobody is very eager to discuss Count Eglamour's origin now that Eglamour has become indispensable to Duke Alessandro. Yes, it is thanks to Eglamour that the Duke has ample leisure and needful privacy for the pursuit of recreations which are reputed to be curious."

"I do not understand you, Guido." Graciosa was all wonder.

"It is perhaps as well," the merchant said, a triflesadly. Then Guido shrugged. "To be brief, mistress, business annoys the Duke. He finds in this Eglamour an industrious person who affixes seals, draughts proclamations, makes treaties, musters armies, devises pageants and collects revenues, quite as efficiently, upon the whole, as Alessandro would be capable of doing these things. So Alessandro amuses himself as his inclinations prompt, and Alessandro's people are none the worse off on account of it."

"Heigho! I foresee that I shall never fall in love with the Duke," Graciosa declared. "It is unbefitting and it is a little cowardly for a prince to shirk the duties of his station. Now if I were the Duke I would grant my father a pension, and have Eglamour hanged, and purchase a new gown of silvery green in which I would be ravishingly beautiful, and afterward—Why, what would you do if you were the Duke, Master Guido?"

"What would I do if I were the Duke?" he echoed. "What would I do if I were a great lord instead of a mere tradesman? I think you know the answer, mistress."

"Oh, you would make me your duchess, of course. That is quite understood," said Graciosa, with the lightest of laughs. "But I was speaking seriously, Guido."

Guido at that considered her intently for a half-minute. His countenance was of portentous gravity, but in his eyes she seemed to detect a lurking impishness.

"And it is not a serious matter that a peddler of crystals should have dared to love a nobleman's daughter? You are perfectly right, mistress. That I worship you is an affair which does not concern any person save myself in any way whatsoever, although I think that knowledge of the fact would put your father to the trouble of sharpening his dagger. Indeed, I am not certain that I worship you, for in order to adore whole-heartedly the idolater must believe his idol to be perfect. Now your nails are of an ugly shape, like that of little fans; your mouth is too large, and I have long ago perceived that you are a trifle lame in spite of your constant care to conceal the fact. I do not admire these faults, for faults they are undoubtedly. Then, too, I know that you are vain and self-seeking, and look forward contentedly to the time when your father will transfer his ownership of such physical attractions as heaven gave you to that nobleman who offers the highest price for them. It is true you have no choice in the matter, but you will participate in a monstrous bar-

gain, and I would prefer that you exhibited distaste for it." And with that he returned composedly to inspection of his pearls.

"And to what end, Guido?" It was the first time Graciosa had completely waived the reticence of a superior caste. You saw that the child's parted lips were tremulous, and you divined her childish fits of dreading that glittering, inevitable court life shared with an unimaginable husband.

But Guido only grumbled whimsically. "I am afraid that men do not always love according to the strict laws of logic. I desire your happiness above all things; yet to see you so abysmally untroubled by anything that troubles me is another matter."

"But I am not untroubled, Guido—" she began swiftly. Graciosa broke off in speech, shrugged, flashed a smile at him. "For I cannot fathom you, Master Guido, and that troubles me. I am very fond of you, and yet I do not trust you. You tell me that you love me greatly. It pleases me to have you say this. You see that I am very candid this morning, Master Guido. Yes, it pleases me, and I know that for the sake of seeing me you daily endanger your life, for if my father heard of our meetings he would have you killed. You would not incur such hare-brained risks unless you cared very greatly, and yet, somehow, I do not believe that it is altogether for me you care."

Then Guido was in train to protest an all-mastering and entirely candid devotion, but he was interrupted.

"Most women have these awkward intuitions," spoke a melodious voice; and turning, Graciosa met the eyes of the intruder. This magnificent young man showed a proud and bloodless face which contrasted sharply with his painted lips and cheeks. His scanty beard was the color of dead grass. He was sumptuously clothed in white satin worked with silver, and around his cap was a gold chain hung with diamonds. Now he handed his fringed riding gloves to Guido to hold.

"Yes, mistress, I suspect that Eglamour here cares greatly for the fact that

you are Lord Balthazar's daughter, and cousin to the late Marquis of Cibo. For Cibo has many kinsmen at court who still resent the circumstance that the matching of his wits against Eglamour's earned for Cibo a deplorably public demise. So they conspire against Eglamour with vexatious industry, as an upstart, as a nobody thrust over people of proven descent; and Eglamour goes about in hourly apprehension of a knife thrust. If he could make a match with you, though, your father—thrifty man—would be easily appeased. Your cousins, those proud, grumbling Castel-Franchi, Strozzi and Valori, would not prove over-obdurate toward a kinsman who, whatever his past indiscretions, has so many pensions and offices at his disposal. Yes, honor would permit a truce, and Eglamour could bind them to his interests within ten days, and be rid of the necessity of sleeping in chain armor. Have I not unraveled the scheme correctly, Eglamour?"

"Your Highness was never lacking in penetration," replied the other man in a dull voice. He stood motionless, holding the gloves, his shoulders a little bowed as if under some physical load. His eyes were fixed upon the ground. He divined the change in Graciosa's face and did not care to see it.

"And so you are Count Eglamour!" said Graciosa, in a sort of whisper. "That is very strange. I had thought you were my friend, Guido. But I forgot. I must not call you Guido any longer." She gave a little shiver here. He stayed motionless and did not look at her. "I have often wondered what manner of man you were. So it was you—whose hand I touched just now—you who poisoned Duke Cosmo, you who had the good cardinal assassinated, you who betrayed the brave lord of Faenza! Oh, yes, they openly accuse you of every imaginable crime—this patient Eglamour, this reptile who has crept into his power through filthy passages. It is very strange you should be capable of so much wickedness, for to me you seem only a sullen lackey."

He winced and raised his eyes at this. His face remained expressionless. He

knew these accusations at least to be demonstrable lies, for as it happened, he had never found his advancement to hinge upon the commission of any actual crime. But even so, the past was a cemetery he did not care to have revived.

"And it was you who detected the Marquis of Cibo's conspiracy. Tebaldeo was my cousin, Count Eglamour, and I loved him. We were reared together. We used to play here in these woods, and I remember how Tebaldeo once fetched me a wren's nest from that maple yonder. I stood just here. I was weeping because I was afraid that he would fall. If he had fallen and had been killed it would have been the luckier for him." Graciosa sighed. "They say that he conspired. I do not know. I only know that by your orders, Count Eglamour, my cousin Tebaldeo was fastened upon a Saint Andrew's cross and his arms and legs were each broken in two places with an iron bar. Then your servants took Tebaldeo, still living, and laid him upon a carriage wheel which was hung upon a pivot. The upper edge of this wheel was cut with very fine teeth like those of a saw, so that his agony might be complete. Tebaldeo's poor mangled legs were folded beneath his body so that his heels touched the back of his head, they tell me. In such a posture he died very slowly while the wheel turned very slowly there in the sunlit market place, and flies buzzed greedily about him, and the shopkeepers took holiday in order to watch Tebaldeo die—the same Tebaldeo who once fetched me a wren's nest from yonder maple."

Eglamour spoke now. "I gave the orders for the Marquis of Cibo's execution. I did not devise the manner of his death. The punishment for Cibo's crime was long ago fixed by our laws. Cibo plotted to kill the Duke. Cibo confessed as much."

But the girl waved this aside. "And then you plan this masquerade. You plan to make me care for you so greatly that even when I know you to be Count Eglamour I will still care for you. You plan to marry me, so as to placate Tebaldeo's kinsmen, so as to bind them

to your interests. It was a fine, bold stroke of policy, I know, to use me as a stepping stone to safety—but was it fair to me?" Her voice rose now a little. She seemed to plead with him. "Look you, Count Eglamour, I was a child only yesterday. I have never loved any man. But you have loved many women, I know, and long experience has taught you many ways of moving a woman's heart. Oh, was it fair, was it worth while, to match your skill against my ignorance? Think how unhappy I would be if even now I loved you, and how I would loathe myself!"

"But I am getting angry over nothing. Nothing has happened except that I have dreamed in idle moments of a brave and comely lover who held his head so high that all other women envied me; and now I have awakened."

Then the young man in white spoke cheerily. "Fie, Mistress Graciosa, you must not be too harsh with Eglamour. It is his nature to scheme, and he weaves his plots as inevitably as the spider does her web. Believe me, it is wiser to forget the rascal—as I do—until there is need of him; and I think you will have no more need to consider Eglamour's trickeries, for you are very beautiful, Graciosa."

He had drawn closer to the girl, and he brought a cloying odor of frangipani, bergamot and vervain. His nostrils quivered; his face had taken on an odd pinched look; for all that he smiled as over some occult jest. Graciosa was a little frightened by his bearing, which was both furtive and predatory.

"Oh, do not be offended, for I have some rights to say what I desire in these parts. For, *Dei gratia*, I am the overlord of these parts, Graciosa—a neglected prince who wondered over the frequent absences of his chief counselor and secretly set spies upon him. Eglamour here will attest as much. Or if you cannot believe poor Eglamour any longer, I shall have other witnesses within the half-hour. Oh, yes, they are to meet me here at noon—some twenty crop-haired, stalwart cutthroats. They will come riding upon beautiful broad-chested horses covered with red velvet

trappings that are hung with little silver bells which jingle delightfully. They will come very soon, and then we will ride back to court."

Duke Alessandro touched his painted mouth with his forefinger as if in fantastic mimicry of a man imparting a confidence.

"I think that I shall take you with me, Graciosa, for you are very beautiful. You are as slim as a lily and more white, and your eyes are two purple mirrors in each of which I see a tiny image of Duke Alessandro. The woman I loved yesterday was a big splendid wench with cheeks like apples. It is not desirable that women should be so large. All women should be little creatures that fear you. They should have thin, plaintive voices, and in shrinking from you be as slight to the touch as a cobweb. It is not possible to love a woman ardently save when you realize how easy it would be to murder her."

"God! God!" said Count Eglamour, very softly, for he was familiar with the look which had now come into Duke Alessandro's face. Indeed, all persons about court were quick to notice this odd pinched look, like that of a traveler nipped at by frosts, and people at court became obsequious within the instant in dealing with the fortunate woman who had aroused it, Count Eglamour remembered.

And the girl did not speak at all, but stood motionless, staring in bewildered, pitiable, childlike fashion, and the color had ebbed from her countenance.

Alessandro was frankly pleased. "You fear me, do you not, Graciosa? See now, when I touch your hand it is soft and cold as a serpent's skin, and you shudder. I am very tired of women who love me, of all women with bold, hungry eyes. To you my touch will always be a martyrdom; you will always loathe me, and therefore I shall not weary of you for a long while. Come, Graciosa. Your father shall have all the wealth and state that even his greedy imaginings can devise, so long as you can contrive to loathe me. We will find you a suitable husband. You shall have flattery and titles, gold and jewels, soft stuffs

and superb palaces such as are your beauty's due henceforward."

"Highness!" cried Eglamour. "Highness, I love this girl."

"Ah, then you cannot ever be her husband," Duke Alessandro returned. "You would have suited otherwise. No, no, we must seek out some other person of discretion. It will all be very amusing, for I think that she is now quite innocent, as pure as the high angels are. See, Eglamour, she cannot speak; she stays still as a lark that has been taken in a snare. It will be very marvelous to make her as I am." He meditated, as obscurely aware of opposition; his shoulders twitched fretfully, and momentarily his eyes lightened like the glare of a cannon through its smoke. "You made a beast of me, some long-faced people say. Beware lest the beast turn and rend you."

Count Eglamour plucked aimlessly at his chin. Then he laughed as a dog yelps. He dropped the gloves which he had held till this, deliberately, as if the act were a rite. His shoulders straightened and purpose seemed to flow into the man. "No," he said, quietly, "I will not have it. It was not I who made a brainsick beast of you, my prince, but even so, I have never been too nice to profit by your vices. I have taken my thrifty toll of abomination; I have stood by contentedly, not urging you on, yet never trying to stay you, as you waded deeper and ever deeper into the filth of your debaucheries, because meanwhile you left me so much power. Yes, in some part it is my own handiwork which is my ruin. I accept it. Nevertheless, you shall not harm this child."

"I venture to remind you, Eglamour, that I am still the master of this duchy." Alessandro was languidly amused, and had begun to regard his adversary with genuine curiosity.

"Oh, yes, but that is nothing to me. At court you are the master. At court I have seen mothers raise the veils from their daughters' faces, with smiles that were more loathsome than the grimaces of a fiend, because you happened to be passing. But here in these woods, Your Highness, I see only the woman

I love and the man who has insulted her."

"This is very admirable fooling," the Duke considered. "So all the world is changed and Pandarus is transformed into Hector! These are sonorous words, Eglamour, but with what deeds do you propose to back them?"

"By killing you, Your Highness."

"So!" said the Duke. "The farce ascends in interest." He drew with a flourish, with actual animation, for sottish, debauched and power-crazed as this young man was, he came of a race to whom danger was a cordial. "Very luckily a sword forms part of your disguise, so let us amuse ourselves. It is always diverting to kill, and if by any chance you kill me, I shall at least be rid of the intolerable knowledge that tomorrow will be just like today." The Duke descended blithely into the level road and placed himself on guard.

Then both men silently went about the business in hand. Both were oddly calm, almost as if preoccupied by some more important matter to be settled later on. The two swords clashed, gleamed rigidly for an instant, and then their rapid interplay, so far as vision went, melted into a flickering snarl of silver, for the sun was high and each man's shadow was huddled under him. Then Eglamour thrust savagely, and in the act trod the edge of a puddle and fell ignominiously prostrate. His sword was wrenched ten feet from him, for the Duke had parried skillfully. Eglamour lay thus at Alessandro's mercy.

"Well, well!" the Duke cried petulantly. "And am I to be kept waiting forever? You were a thought quicker in obeying my caprices yesterday. Get up, you muddy lout, and let us kill each other with some pretension of adroitness."

Eglamour rose, and, sobbing, caught up his sword and rushed toward the Duke in an agony of shame and rage. His attack now was that of a frenzied animal, quite careless of defense and desirous only of murder. Twice the Duke wounded him, but it was Alessandro who drew backward, composedly hindering the brutal onslaught he was

powerless to check. Then Eglamour ran him through the chest, and gave vent to a strangled growling cry as Alessandro fell. Eglamour wrenched his sword free and grasped it by the blade so that he might stab the Duke again and again. He meant to hack the abominable flesh, to slash and mutilate that haughty mask of infamy, but Graciosa clutched his weapon by the hilt.

The girl panted and her breath came thick. "He gave you your life."

Eglamour looked up. She leaned now upon his shoulder, her face now almost brushing his as he knelt over the unconscious Duke, and Eglamour found that at her dear touch all passion had gone out of him.

"Mistress Graciosa," he said equably, "the Duke is not yet dead. It is impossible to let him live. You may think that he voiced only a caprice just now. I think so, too, but I know the man, and I realize that this madman's whims are ruthless and irresistible. Living, Duke Alessandro's appetites are merely whetted by opposition, so much so that he finds no pleasures sufficiently piquant unless they have God's interdiction as a sauce. Living, he will make of you his amusement, and a little later his broken, soiled and cast-by plaything. It is therefore necessary that I kill him."

She parted from him, and he, too, rose to his feet.

"And afterward," she said quietly—"and afterward you must die just as Tebaldeo died."

"That is the law, mistress. But I am a lost man now, whether Alessandro lives or dies."

"Oh, that is very true," she said. "A moment since you were Count Eglamour, whom every person feared. Now there is not a beggar in the kingdom who would change lots with you, for you are a friendless and hunted man in peril of dreadful death. But even so, you are not penniless, Count Eglamour, for these jewels here which formed part of your masquerade are of great value, and there is a world outside. The frontier is not two miles distant. You have only to escape through the forest into the hill country, and you need not kill Duke

Alessandro after all. I would have you go hence with hands as clean as possible."

"Perhaps I might escape." He found it quaint to note how calm she was and how tranquilly his own thoughts ran. "But first the Duke must die, because I dare not leave you to his mercy."

"How does that matter?" she returned. "You know very well that my father intends to market me as best suits his interests. Here I am so much merchandise. The Duke is as free as any other man to cry a bargain." He would have spoken in protest, but Graciosa interrupted wearily: "Oh, yes, it is to this end only that we daughters of Duke Alessandro's vassals are nurtured, just as you told me—oh, how long ago!—that we may market such physical attractions as heaven accords us. And I do not see how a wedding can in any way ennoble the transaction by causing it to profane a holy sacrament. Ah, no, Balthazar's daughter was near attaining all that she had been taught to desire, for a purchaser came and he bid lavishly. You know very well that my father would have been delighted. But you must need upset the bargain. 'No I will not have it!' Count Eglamour must cry. It cost you very highly to speak those words. I think it would have puzzled my father to hear you speak those words at which so many fertile lands, stout castles, well timbered woodlands, herds of cattle, gilded coaches, liveries and curious tapestries, fine clothing and spiced foods, all vanished like a puff of smoke. Ah, yes, my father would have thought you mad."

"I had no choice," he said, and waved a little gesture of impotence. He spoke as with difficulty, almost wearily. "I love you. It is a theme on which I do not embroider. So long as I had thought to use you as an instrument I could woo fluently enough. Today I saw that you were frightened and helpless—oh, quite helpless. And something changed in me. I knew for the first time that I loved you and that I was not clean as you are clean. What it was of passion and horror, of despair and adoration and yearning, which struggled in my being then I cannot tell you of.

It spurred me on to speak as I did then, but it has robbed me of sugared eloquence, it has left me chary of speech. It is necessary that I climb very high because of my love for you, and upon the heights there is silence."

And Graciosa meditated. "Here I am so much merchandise. Heigho, since I cannot help it—since bought and sold I must be, one day or another—at least I will go at a noble price. Yet I do not think I am quite worth the value of these castles and lands and other things which you gave up because of me, so that it will be necessary to make up the difference, dear, by loving you very much."

And at that he touched her chin, gently and masterfully, for Graciosa would have averted her face, and it seemed to Eglamour that he could never have his fill of gazing on the radiant, shamed tenderness of Graciosa's face. "Oh, my girl!" he whispered. "Oh, my wonderful worshiped merry girl, whom God has fashioned with such loving care, you who had only scorn to give me when I was a kingdom's master! And would you go with me now that I am friendless and homeless?"

"But I shall always have a friend," she answered—"a friend who showed me what Balthazar's daughter was and what love is. And I am vain enough to believe I shall not ever be very far from home so long as I am near his heart."

A mortal man could not but take her in his arms.

Then these two turned toward the hills, leaving Duke Alessandro where he lay in the road, a very lamentable figure in much bloodied finery. They turned toward the hills and entered a forest whose ordering was time's contemporary and where there was no grandeur save that of the trees.

But upon the summit of the nearest hill they paused and looked over a restless welter of foliage that glittered in the sun, far down into the highway. It bustled like an unroofed anthill, for the road was alive with men who seemed from this distance very small. Duke Alessandro's attendants had found him and were clustered in a great hubbub about their reviving master.

Beyond was the broad river, seen as a ribbon of silver now, and on its remoter bank the leaded roofs of a strong fortress glistened like a child's new toy. Tilled fields showed here and there, no larger in appearance than so many outspread handkerchiefs. Far down in the east a small black smudge upon the pearl-colored and vaporous horizon was all they could discern of a walled city

filled with factories for the working of hemp and furs and alum and silk and bitumen.

"It is a very rich and lovely land," said Eglamour—"this kingdom which a half-hour since lay in the hollow of my hand." He viewed it for a while, and not without pensiveness. Then he took Graciosa's hand and looked into her face, and he laughed joyously.



BALLADE OF YOUTH TO SWINBURNE

By Orrick Johns

O POET, have you gone to lave
In the great sea that wooed your soul?
O Singer, who to England gave
Her brightest lore of love and dole—
In some sweet place beneath the roll
Of mighty waves you sing, I ween,
The Lesbian fragments you made whole
Who had a lute from Mitylene.

With cool-browed Sappho do you sing
Such loves as made her dark eyes glow,
While shining maidens nectar bring
And perfumed hyacinth bestow?
Or with Theocritus you go
Through meadows dressed in gold and green—
We would so dream of you, who know
You had a lute from Mitylene.

That "sad, bad, glad" Villon of France
Ere this has thanked you for the care
You bore him, and by lovely chance
Catillus smiled upon you there;
With bay-wreathed heads what joys you share
Along fleet days beyond the screen
Death lowered when you took the Stair,
Who had a lute from Mitylene!

ENVOI

O Death, his little brothers, we,
Who found that piercing song too keen,
Make mourn . . . "Dost thou know this was he
Who had a lute from Mitylene?"

THE SQUAB

A Page From the Book of Broadway

By George Bronson-Howard

O. HENRY intended to write this story. But he would have written it wrong, for O. Henry was full of chivalry. He showed me certain notes once. "Poor girl, tied to drug fiend husband, quits him to make him choose between his vice and her. Enter noble Zu-Zu. Fight between awakened love for a real man and duty to marital bonds. Awakened love triumphs. Who shall blame her? Yet when husband lies dying, surreptitious visits and pinching of pin money to make dying days happier. Zu-Zu suspects clandestine visits to mean house. Follows her night after night. Suspicion finally conquers. Knocks on door. Girl bars way. Zu-Zu pushes her aside. Husband blesses Zu-Zu: 'In all the world only one friend beside her—you! You deserve her. I never did.'

"The faithful creature, that husband might not imagine disloyalty to Zu-Zu, has told husband Zu-Zu sent her and money. Unworthy suspicions of Zu-Zu dispelled. Husband pretends sleep. They go into next room. Husband takes overdose of morphia. Doctor arrives. 'Strange,' says Doctor, feeling cold hands of dead husband. 'I would have sworn he was recovering, would have lived.'"

In case these notes are too sketchy, you had better be told the point in this: the nobility of Zu-Zu makes the worthless husband kill himself just on the point of recovery, so that Zu-Zu can make her what the old plays used to call "an honest woman."

The story did not happen that way at all. That is simply O. Henry's romantic

way of putting it, added to O. Henry's romantic vision. For O. Henry was the Hans Christian Andersen of the twentieth century and of Manhattan. Moreover, like all men who lived long without them, O. Henry always idealized women.

This is the real story, and it is nothing like as pretty. Nor as dramatic. Nor anything.

II

KATE CAREWE was a typical Broadway girl. She came from Ireland via Jersey City. Her mother was an industrious, respectable body who, in Mayo, had sewed cheerfully for the gentry. For the first few years in America, she also sewed cheerfully. Then she sewed mutinously, finally ceased to sew, investing her savings in a small millinery shop, and became the "aykwale of an-n-ny lady in th' la-n-nd." For this she gave up a warm, bright room overlooking the Jersey hills, pleasant, easy work under a kind mistress, the best of food and delightful evenings by a bright fire in the housekeeper's room, frequent trips to matinees with the children, the choice of her mistress's slightly worn clothes and wages of forty dollars a month, every cent of which she saved, for her mistress paid one of the tenant-farmer's wives to look after little Lizzie (afterward Kate Carewe), and her mother was able to see her every day. But a seamstress in a great house, while not a servant, was not an equal. Her mistress did not invite Mrs. Clancy to dine in the hall, nor to use the piano in the drawing room; both

grievous omissions, for, had she done so, Mrs. Clancy would not have quitted her. After several years' residence in America Mrs. Clancy knew she was the "aykwale of an-n-nyone," and her Lizzie was to be a lady or she would know the reason why.

So she toiled in a dingy back room turning twenty-cent straw shapes into three-dollar hats with the aid of fifty cents' worth of velvet, ribbon and feathers. "Any hat for three dollars" was her slogan; and, by doing the housework herself, letting one room and serving breakfast to her lodger, minding the shop, looking after Lizzie and making her clothes, Mrs. Clancy managed to have meat three times a week and be no more than a month behind with butcher, grocer and landlord.

Lizzie was sent to a private school, a school where her mother fondly imagined were the daughters of aristocracy. As a matter of fact, they were the daughters of just such people as herself: small shopkeepers, bookkeepers, floor-walkers, heads of departments. These girls were taught that a knowledge of housewifery was a disgrace, and that she who cooked her own meals was irrevocably done for. They learned to despise their hard-working parents for being natural, and were schooled in the belief that it was a proud privilege they were one day to allow some coarse man: the honor of supporting a perfectly useless female creature. Their idea of a gentleman was a man who put scent on his handkerchief and referred to them agreeably and euphemistically as "ladies." Their clothes were cheap copies of what they thought the Vanderbilt women were wearing, and for such as they the "best selling" novels are written: books in which every American girl is an uncrowned queen, and illustrated by men who use exactly Lizzie's type for their models.

Their time out of school was spent reading these novels, procured from the library, while they lounged about in unclean but gaudy kimonos, munching fudge. Or else they crossed to New York and went to popular-priced matinees or strolled along Broadway or Fifth Avenue.

Men who accosted them on the street were frequently allowed to buy them meals in over-decorated cafés, but, at the first sign of "freshness," they crushed these unconventional escorts by intimating that they were unfamiliar with the "society of ladies."

To afford these luxurious young persons such easy lives, their mothers (like Lizzie's) generally showed raspy, blackened hands from housework, for few kept servants. The work made the mothers prematurely old and sometimes killed them. It killed Mrs. Clancy, and the sale of the shop's stock and fixtures brought Lizzie to Manhattan in her half-silk stockings and left her a few hundred dollars to begin life with.

By the time it was exhausted, she got work with a burlesque company at eighteen a week; for she had neither the bold beauty nor the piquant type of features necessary to obtain her speedily a Broadway musical comedy engagement. Besides, when managers squeezed her arm, patted her cheek or embraced her, she taught them what was due a "lady," which, instead of making them grind their teeth and swear to conquer, as they did when the heroines of best sellers repulsed them, caused her to be stared at coolly and shown out speedily. She soon learned that girls of her type were numerous and were not taken seriously; nothing, in fact, happened as per her favorite authors.

In burlesque shows, however, matters are arranged differently. These girls must play twelve performances a week—in the West fourteen—with continual rehearsals of "new stuff." Good-looking girls who will work so hard are difficult to get and are treated respectfully. There are no "failures" in burlesque, no rehearsing ten weeks and playing two. Forty weeks are guaranteed, and an unambitious girl once "on the wheel" stays there. She can live on her wages, and generally does. It may be news to the general public that they pride themselves furiously upon their respectability.

But there was no glamour to it for Kate Carewe; hard drilling, no leisure—

with a matinee at two and a night performance at eight every day, and, as their songs grew too familiar, new ones substituted, which meant also daily rehearsals; and, worst of all, the companionship of people who almost invariably preferred "them" to "these," "seen" to "saw," and concomitant solecisms of speech.

After a year of this, she again searched Broadway for a better engagement, got one, and quitted it indignantly the third day of rehearsals, when the tired producer, after showing her personally a difficult step four times, told her in a flash of anger she had better go back to the kitchen with her Chicago pedal movement. Accustomed to lord it over an uneducated stage manager, she again repeated her famous remark about somebody's ignorance regarding "ladies," and made history for other and admiring choristers.

So, tired and weary after rehearsing with "Bob Pilchester's Pickaback Girls" for a second season, she married Ed Peevey, a song writer.

III

A FEW words concerning "Ed" and his type, and our tragi-comedy moves on.

Peevey wrote the sort of songs you send out word to your cook to stop singing. He existed at a stage when American song writing claimed for its own many worthy waiters. Peevey had been a waiter in a "honkatonk"—they call them "cabarets" today. Such waiters sang. The most popular songs of these times—we speak of ten years past—were of the home-and-mother variety, liberally sprinkled with gray hairs, mansions of aching hearts, birds in gilded cages and children who died young to cease from being "always in the way."

The popularity of such songs naturally attracted the attention of the men who sang them. Since to write them necessitated just what these men possessed: a lack of education, gross sentimentality and abundant ignorance, it

is not surprising that the most popular song writers of the day were graduates from the ranks of "honkatonk" waiters. At the time Kate Carewe met Peevey, he had just cleared six thousand dollars from the sale of a ballad entitled "Don't Call Mommer 'Nursie' for Nursie's my Mamma"—the tale of a child of the rich who never saw his real mother except at a distance and who pathetically insisted that his black nurse was the maternal parent.

Now in the lives of all commonplace men there comes a time when they groan at their dissipated lives, and yearn for "some good girl" to cause them to "turn square." Peevey was in that state of mind. The stage manager of "The Pickaback Girls," casually commenting on women in general, had pointed out Kate.

"Think of a classy girl like that working in a company of roughnecks like this jest to keep square!" said he.

Two things had the erstwhile Lizzie that Peevey coveted—two things that Peevey had not: virtue and what he took for education. One thing had Peevey that Kate Carewe coveted: money.

So they were married, and did not live happily ever afterward.

IV

PEEVEY never wrote another sensational seller after the "Nursie-Mamma" thing. Taste changed. So many parodies were leveled at the bathetic ballads that the mere sound of a minor barber shop chord provoked titles like "Since Sister Lost Her Gold-Filled Teeth, Her Smile Gives Me a Pain," or "They are Moving Father's Grave to Dig a Sewer"—the parodies representing the same elegance of taste that had been responsible for the original. Ragtime, hitherto confined to comic songs, was extended to cover ballad sentiments. While the new songs represented only a fractional increase in musical and lyrical value, that fraction was unsurmountable by the Peevey class. The "Nursie-Mamma" thing had been Peevey in apogee.

He wrote many songs, comic and serious; the comic ones very sad, the serious ones very comic; but while firms printed them because of his whilom popularity, they were neither pushed nor advertised after the first few had failed to pay for half or even a quarter of their publicity bills. Peevey's songs became mere "counter music." Their dwindling sales did not alarm Peevey until too late. By the time he was an alarmed man, he was also a ruined one.

The process of ruination took about a year, during which time Peevey was busy spending some ten thousand dollars accrued royalties. Kate taught him to be what she considered a gentleman, teaching him to eschew the grosser errors of speech, ready made dress neckties and derby hats worn over one ear. In those days a Broadway gentleman was an alarming creature, with the shoulders of an Olympian, the chest expansion of a titmouse, a dress coat that showed an equilateral triangle of stiff linen, a mouse gray waistcoat and tie to match, a small silk hat hiding the forehead and exposing a thick mop of hair slightly raised from the back of its brim, and an appearance of exquisite discomfort. Such people opened much wine in many frescoed places, paid any extortionate price for first night seats and published advertisements of themselves and their wares in a theatrical and sporting newspaper; finding no shame in alluding to themselves, if they chanced to be performers, or their wares, if song or sketch writers, as "knockouts" and "nonpareils."

Mr. and Mrs. Peevey lived in a palmoyeried apartment hotel near Broadway, and rang bells for everything they wanted, tipping no less than a quarter even when the desired article was no more than a morning newspaper. They rose a few hours after high noon, breakfasted in bed, spent the afternoons moving from café to café or at professional matinees, dined royally at some notorious place, and seldom failed to return to it or its like after witnessing some performance. The summer was spent at Atlantic City.

This was Kate's idea of life, real life. She did nothing, was waited on like Cleopatra, wore striking clothes, and preened them in well known places where she soon became one of the features. She referred to all theatrical notables by their first names, and was gently patronizing in her attitude toward the work of even the most famous. She knew what was due a lady and saw that she received it. Her speech became a labored imitation of that jargon used by Americanized Englishmen who portray sporting aristocrats on the stage. In three words, she was happy.

V

HER happiness was of short duration. The Peevey budget became exhausted just before winter. They moved from the apartment hotel owing two months' bills and leaving most of their apparel behind them, and took a furnished room. At first Peevey encouraged her in the belief that another song hit would soon rehabilitate them. He ran from publisher to publisher, getting twenties and fifties advanced to him on songs. As these never sold enough to justify the advances, he soon could get no more than tens, and seldom those. He had begun a systematic course of borrowing from friends, however, and, Broadway being peopled with moral cowards, was seldom refused at first. Sometimes a burlesque manager would give him a contract to write the opening choruses, ensembles and non-selling songs of a production; compensation varying from one hundred and fifty dollars to double that, never more. He began visiting pawnshops with his own vivid jewelry, and, after her refusal to imitate him, stole hers one night and did likewise. She began violent recriminations that lasted a week; at the end of the week, he took careful aim and knocked her down.

He did this in rage, immediately regretting it. No cataclysm eventuating, he, by degrees, began to treat her as he had treated women of his own kind in the old days. He had been careful

hitherto with Kate, deferential, on his good behavior, for she was a "lady." She threatened to leave him soon after he put the new system into force, but she never did. Did she ask for a glass of water, he would inquire brutally: "Is your leg broke?" In the old days, he would have responded: "Yes, dearest."

She could not understand why she permitted such treatment; but it soon dawned upon her that she loved this ungrammatical, worthless fellow. Poor Peevey! Momentary success had ruined a good waiter, an excellent member of the lower class. Four years of luxury and of mingling with well known people had made it impossible, in his small mind, to return to the humbler tasks that were suited to his small capabilities.

He brooded over his misfortunes, and treated Kate, by turns, with sentimental affection and ferocity. Soon he could negotiate no more loans nor secure any advances. Publishers laughed at his songs. Even burlesque took on that fractional increase in musical and lyrical value which he could not surmount. Former friends hurried down side streets when they saw him coming.

There being nothing else to do, Kate suggested she go back to work. Peevey's barroom acquaintance with managers gave him sufficient influence to get her New York engagements, one after the other; and to this meager income they somehow adjusted themselves. For a few days after her salary night, Peevey might be seen in the cafés where professionals thronged, telling newcomers in vaudeville and musical comedy of his former "million-copy hit." He guaranteed to write them "absolute knock-outs," and jeered at all current successful song writers. Often he secured advances from these vaudevillians green to Broadway; but, the songs forthcoming, became immediately a joke. Soon he was a "Broadway character," whose slightest word was sufficient to cause roars of laughter.

Peevey began to remain in the house oftener, seldom rising until mid-afternoon. He formed the acquaintance of a pickpocket on the next floor, who, be-

cause of the law, seldom ventured out until dusk, when he plied his trade among the shoppers and those returning home from work on the crowded cross-town cars. The pickpocket was an opium smoker. Having nothing to do, Peevey lay for long hours on the pickpocket's bed, watching him, in that darkened room where the sun never penetrated through the drawn blinds and heavy portières, dig out the chocolate-colored stuff, toast, roll and place it to the clay bowl, through which it disappeared over the tiny flame of peanut oil. The pickpocket talked entertainingly under the opium influence; a pert product of great cities, he was a pickpocket because in no other way could he gain enough to support himself and his wife, a pale, shrunken sweatshop creature who had been in Arizona for years. The pickpocket explained that he smoked the opium because it gave him courage and deftness in his profession and also staved off the inroads of consumption. "I should be with her down there," the pickpocket said, "but what with slippin' coppers and payin' mouthpieces when you git nailed, I never git enough dough ahead."

Soon Peevey smoked. He found that dullness fled before the drug. The smallest details of life became interesting. He was filled with the delight of living. He would sing to the pickpocket all the songs he had written; and would even compose more.

He became satisfied with his position in life, looking loftily upon those who worked hard. After a few horrified remonstrances, Kate found it pleasant to sit on the other side of the bed and read aloud to him while he smoked, for he had purchased a layout of his own now. Soon she embraced the habit little by little, and began to share his philosophy.

So passed four years, Peevey occasionally finding jobs at playing the piano; occasionally, under influence, writing songs that he sold outright for fifty dollars apiece; once or twice filling vaudeville engagements on the "small time" with Kate when "turkey trotting" and such dances were elevated

from Twenty-ninth Street dives to Sherry cotillions and two-dollar houses.

Then a revulsion seized him. He substituted drink for opium and, in a drunken brawl, received a head-splitting blow that sent him to the hospital. Kate was growing stout, and was not renewing New York engagements with former regularity, showgirls being on the wane anyhow. One manager for whom she had played in four productions employed her grudgingly, telling her she must train down twenty pounds or never hope to work for him again.

Peevey's hospital bills mounted up, and she pawned everything pawnable. He had recovered consciousness but not reason.

Kate spent an afternoon sobbing. She had long known that she loved better than herself this ignorant, low fellow who beat her when so inclined and for whom she had labored many years. If he did not receive first class surgical treatment and the right kind of medicine and food, he would never recover. And what could she do on twenty-five dollars a week—and that only when her play was a success?

VI

It was at this juncture that she met Zu-Zu.

Zu-Zu had come out of the West and out of journalism. He was what people call a "manly" man; meaning to say a half-civilized one; a person who disdains the use of talcum after shaving, a nicety of attire, liquids to keep the hair smooth, Aubrey Beardsley and other impressionists (all schools), Wagnerian opera, and all nationalities except Americans. Of all the men I ever knew, he was best fitted to write what, when produced, would be termed, "the great American novel."

For Zu-Zu possessed the magic art of story telling. No school can teach this. No education can bring it about. It makes McCutcheon popular in spite of his defects and permits Gissing to go unread. Sometimes it is combined with insight and a sense of the human com-

edy, and then we have great writers; but nature often bestows it upon the humblest.

As I have said, Kate met Zu-Zu. He knew an author who had a sweetheart in Kate's company. On this particular night the author requested his sweetheart to fetch along a friend for Zu-Zu, who accompanied him. She invited Kate; and as every meal eaten at another's expense was more toward hospital bills, Kate went.

Zu-Zu (and remember that at that time he was an admirable and promising young writer) loved her almost immediately. She discovered this fact at the same time. That night she prayed for the second time in many years, thanking her Creator for answering the prayer of the first time. Like the ravens with manna, Zu-Zu had come to this female Elijah. To her he was not a man with human feelings but just a dispensation of Providence.

She studied him from every angle and made plans for a campaign as utterly ruthless as one of Napoleon's. When he made love on their second meeting, she reminded him haughtily that she was a married woman, but then—sadly—that she supposed she must expect as much since she had met him during a stage career. "You men think because a woman is in the chorus that you can treat her differently from the way you would treat your sister."

He was horrified at her suspicions. He declared vehemently he had not known she was married. She sighed: "Married—yes, I am married, and though—No matter; he is my husband still."

By superior masculine logic and cunning, Zu-Zu managed to draw out her story without letting her know he was pumping her. (Poor deluded Zu-Zu, apostle of manliness! You were indeed a babe on Broadway.)

Kate told him of her strict bringing-up, hinting convent schools and ancestry. Her marriage when but a child to a brilliant young song writer. Dazzled, yes, but not really in love. Her years at her husband's side in the gay life of Broadway, unable to win him to more

serious things. Then her horrible suspicions. Her tracking of him to an opium den. Her discovery of his terrible habit.

"Choose between it and me," she had said sternly.

He had chosen her, but, when the opportunity afforded, chose the vice also. She had caught him twice in derelictions.

"The third time I shall leave you," she had warned.

And when the third time came she had done so. "What will you do alone in this great city?" he had jeered. "The Lord will provide," she had returned piously. "I will never return to you."

She drew for Zu-Zu a heartbreaking picture of her attempts to find work at anything but the stage—finally how, much against her will, she had been forced to it.

"How I hate it all!" she murmured dispiritedly in the approved dramatic style, head in palm. "Sometimes I think: is it worth while?"

Zu-Zu hastened to assure her that it was, with her burdens placed upon the back of a strong man who could bear enough, in his manly strength, for two. She repulsed him, horror-stricken.

"I am married, sir!" she said.

"But you do not love him. Say you do not love him."

Finally, she said she did not love him. Then, as she met Zu-Zu daily, began that terrible struggle between love and duty. Zu-Zu understood it; she was saying to herself: "Shall I give myself to him I love, or shall I be true to mere conventional morality?" Zu-Zu understood it because he had written stories in which this striking situation occurs. It was considered a very "strong" situation among the cognoscenti; especially as many editors refused to print stories in which conventional morality got the worst of the argument. The famous Norwegian blue stocking (as his Swedish contemporary called him) had, while modernizing stage technique, inflicted many of these so-called "strong" situations on current literature.

Since Ibsen had set the fashion of admiring these female egotists, Zu-Zu admired Kate for her struggle—admired

her intensely, for she was doing the correct literary thing. He felt like a man in a play. When she gave in, he was inclined to congratulate himself upon his knowledge of women.

He insisted upon her quitting the tainting influence of the stage. He bore her away to Europe, putting an ocean between her and the husband who might come to make a third-act climax and say dramatic things about the mother of his unborn children. But before they went, Kate insisted that she must pay certain bills, and took the five hundred dollars he gave her to the sympathetic interne of the hospital.

"When this gives out, write me in time care of Cook's, London," and she gave him also a fictitious name under which she would receive his letters.

Before going, Zu-Zu established relations with several magazines that used a great deal of fiction. With each (using the enviable prestige of his literary reputation) he made a contract to supply two novelettes and two serials yearly; for which he would receive weekly payments.

VII

So Zu-Zu became a hack writer. His needs exceeded the amount his literary agent thought he should write under one name, so he took another *nom de plume*; and, later, while doctors were fighting for Peevey's life and Kate cabled to get a surgeon whose fee was the price of a forty-thousand word novelette, Zu-Zu threw shame to the winds and used his own name also. Kate's dresses always cost twice as much as other women's, it seemed, and she had a mania for jewelry. He does not know to this day what excellent imitations of pearls and sapphires Parisian jewelers can make, nor that a little unfashionable *atelier* in the Boulevard Raspail provided the frocks for which he imagined he had paid the Sisters Caillot unreasonable sums. Nor does he know that it is a long established custom for women to have shopkeepers send in bills for twice the amount bought and refund the other half to their female cus-

tomers. He has never had a suspicion that Kate does not love him for himself alone.

He works daily six hours, never doing less than six thousand words of "prime" fiction, as one magazine calls it. And, indeed, the magazine is right. Such fiction takes no higher rank than beef. Zu-Zu sits down, closes his eyes and says: "I will write six thousand words," and never leaves his seat until he has done so. He does not bother about euphony, character drawing, lyrical quality nor truth; the main idea is to produce a story that provides a thrill to a chapter. Zu-Zu manages to do this, even though the thrills are becoming secondhand these days.

He is pointed out by the cognoscenti as one who once showed a flash of the divine fire, but only a flash, a flash in the pan. Kate has heard people say this, and she now urges Zu-Zu to take more time, to polish, to do less and of better quality; and, sometimes, Zu-Zu tries. But the trick of polishing peanuts has left him. He has become a writer of sensational fiction pure and simple—the story for the story's sake; and has almost equalled the fecundity of the elder

Dumas. His stories are rarely re-published in book form; and in this day of ten-cent novels in dollar-and-a-half covers that is saying much.

He is married to Kate now, for, after five years and thousands of dollars spent in hospital bills and specialists' fees, Peevey died, still insane. So that is why Kate no longer needs so much jewelry and so many clothes, and, conscious-stricken, urges Zu-Zu to do better work; for his price is falling off; stronger and more vigorous sensationalists are thinking up newer plots with two thrills to the chapter for a cent a word; so why pay Zu-Zu that?

You see now that O. Henry's scenario makes much the prettier story, giving virtue more than its own reward, and making three noble characters where I have been unable to produce even one. Every effect violates its cause. Peevey endeavoring to quit a drug habit is struck down and becomes insane; Kate, endeavoring to bring Peevey back to reason, makes a dray horse out of what might have been a race animal; and Zu-Zu, endeavoring to make Kate nobler, makes himself baser.

It isn't pretty. But it's life.



"MY COUNTRY, 'T IS OF THEE"

New York Version

By Irvin S. Cobb

MY Cohen-try, 't is of thee,
Sweet land of Levi-ty,
Of thee I sing!
Land where the Einsteins pour,
Land where the Epsteins roar,
From every auction store,
Let Friedman ring!



WHEN money talks, even a woman will listen.

FEAR

By Christabel Lowndes Yates

LIIGHT, gaiety, a ripple of conversation and the whole glamour of a cheap, showy restaurant in Paris. At a table laid for two, in the very middle of it all, a little midinette and her "Monsieur" were dining. You would never have guessed, to look at her, that she was a hard-working, thrifty little soul, from a garret in a poor street. The little seamstress was for the moment completely submerged in an unconscious imitation of a woman of fashion.

And yet perhaps, after all, there was no imitation. Possibly she was still so young that the drudgery of life on a pittance had not yet bitten into the very core of her being. Youth perhaps, triumphant and intoxicating, made her for the moment what she longed to be, a creature of gaiety and careless ease. The workroom was forgotten, with its long rows of sallow-faced workgirls bending over the gay-colored masses of other women's clothes, the muted clatter and whir of the sewing machines in the room below—she had forgotten everything, even herself and her poor little gray life, in the glamour of the moment.

Pleasure! She lived for that—lived hungrily through the long hours of drudgery for these Thursday evenings, starving herself often to buy some piece of cheap finery to adorn her for the magic night.

And the man? One passed him by as too typical of the place to be worth more than a glance; then, arrested, one turned back, it was difficult to say why. The fellow was handsome certainly, with an air of dare-deviltry and dormant power in his huge, clumsy strength. But there was nothing insipid about

his good looks. Behind the mask of his clear-cut features you could feel the cold, intellectual brain, merciless perhaps, but intensely, terribly alert.

What queer power was it that drew these two together? Not love certainly—the man's face was too cold, and Marcelle Audin was not of the type that loves easily. Not money, for he had the air of a poor man of the people; not friendship, for in the three weeks of their acquaintance he had not even told her his name. As "Monsieur" alone she knew him.

But though her passions were unstirred, her curiosity was alive. The man haunted and dominated her. The secrecy and the power of him were things that she could not escape. Now while she dined with him alone like this, his presence brought out vividly upon her face an expression that revealed the very soul of her—mingled innocence and knowledge of sin, and a certain greedy, most primitive vanity.

They were talking. In the clatter and hum of the place it was difficult to hear what she said, but it was evident that she was asking him something, and asking it with an affectation of ease and a queer, hungry look on her odd, charming little face.

He leaned back before he answered her, turning his glass of absinthe slowly round and staring at the opalescent color of the stuff. There was a hint of cruelty and mockery in his smiling detachment.

"Why should I tell you who I am?" he said slowly. "What is my name to you? You—like all women—love to play with the mysterious. Possibilities interest you far more than facts. As it

is, when you go about your day's work you can wonder and guess about me. As you sew those long seams you can turn it over in your mind—”

“Oh, no, monsieu', I think of my work.”

“What! All the time?” he said, smiling at her. “Do you never think of Thursdays, or look forward to—”

She shook her head. All the shy youth of her was in her eyes.

“I know how you workgirls chatter,” he said. “I tell you, I know more than you think. How often have you boasted of me as rich, perhaps as famous?”

“Oh, monsieu', *no!*” she said shyly.

Suddenly—perhaps it was the absinthe—he became inflated with his own glory. He leaned forward confidentially and touched one of her little brown hands as it lay on the tablecloth.

“Why not?” he said. “It is true! I am rich—I am famous. All Paris—all the world—talks of me.”

He could see the greediness and the vanity mounting in her as she became plastic in his hands. Money! To the shallow soul of the little midinette it was the supreme thing. Life and its possibilities opened out before her, golden, glowing and wonderful.

“There is nothing I will not do for you,” he said quietly, “but there is one thing, a trifle, which I should like you to do for me. A mere nothing. Will you do it? Will you meet me at ten o'clock on Sunday morning and go with me to a place where I have business, and wait outside a little shop till my car drives up? Then you must give a message to the chauffeur, which I will tell you, and go quickly away. Will you do this for me?”

The workgirl in her was so accustomed to receiving orders that it scarcely occurred to her to refuse. Besides, as he said, it was such a little thing. Her “Yes, monsieu'” carried swift, unquestioning obedience.

He repeated his order, as though it was a matter of importance. “Can you do that faithfully and exactly?” he asked her. “Good! Ten o'clock on Sunday morning, then. You will not forget?”

As she assented again in her humble,

obedient little voice, he leaned back. Just for a second he had the air of a man who can relax tension after a risky bit of work. He raised his glass of absinthe and sipped it unsteadily, and the hand that held it shook ever so slightly. When she saw him like that, the merest flicker of danger flashed into the girl's mind. It was nothing tangible, just a vague, nebulous fear—a sense of the unknown. She could not even formulate it in words, though her brain groped for something to express it.

But though she had no words, her mobile little face had changed. For a man with the queer, deep knowledge of human nature that Monsieur had, words were not needed. Swiftly the tremendous force of the man exerted itself. His shakiness steadied by sheer mental effort. An expression came into his face that was almost fierce. Though she did not think of it till afterward, it bore unmistakably the look of a man who is desperate and remorseless.

Just for a second, though Marcelle did not understand herself, she shrank from him. But there was something in him stronger than her half-fear—perhaps it was the queer force we call magnetism, that impelled her. Though she shrank from him and knew it, she was helpless in his hands.

But with all her cheap ready made fatalism, she could not hide the fear and amazement on her little pale face. That look of terror, the one real vital emotion she had ever shown him, made her look a little tawdry. It dashed the young elusive charm from her, and made her more the fit mate of the man who sat at the other side of the table.

“Shall we go to the Moulin Rouge, or to the Folies? Or would you rather try that cabaret again?” he said. “It's time we were going.”

Pleasure to her was the keynote of life; he knew that, and in striking that note, he had secured her. As she rose to go he was sure of her. She was of the common type where action rules out thought.

As he left her that night he leaned over her smiling. “On Sunday evening,” he said quietly, “I will meet you

at Notre Dame at six o'clock; and if you have done well I will bring you some diamonds."

Notre Dame! It was a curious appointment for such a man. She was no psychologist, but the force of that struck her. It touched some chord in her that numbed distrust. As she looked up at him he could see that all her fear was gone.

II

It was hot sunshine in the little street, and the trees at the edge of the pavement looked dusty. It was nearly deserted, too, except for a gendarme who stared at her curiously as she waited outside the little blue shop, and a couple of women chatting in the sunshine. She had been waiting a long time and the street seemed very dull. Next to the shop itself was a bank, and after that—for it was at a corner—there was a side street.

It seemed an endless time to wait before the car came. It drew up beside her with pulsating engine. The chauffeur got down quickly and flung open the door of the tonneau and got back to his seat. It was then she drew near to the man to give her message. While she spoke the gendarme eyed her curiously. Then, while he still stared at her, she stepped back and began to stroll up and down the street outside the little blue shop. She should have gone home at once, but, though she did not know why, she lingered, no thought of going away in her mind.

Before she had waited more than a few minutes there was a loud report of a revolver, another shot, and another, all in the space of an instant; then the sudden crash of breaking glass close to her but within one of the houses. She turned quickly. It seemed as though it must have been hallucination; that the peace of a Sunday morning could not possibly have been disturbed by such a sound.

She stared up at the windows uncertainly. One of them on the first floor of the bank was cracked from side to side and splintered in the middle, as

though a bullet had passed through it. The gendarme had disappeared, but another could be seen in the distance hurrying to the spot, though he was still a long way off.

Then in a moment Monsieur came out. He was carrying something—she did not notice what it was—and he had a big leather satchel slung round him of the sort that bankers use. In his free hand he held a revolver, and there was an ugly stain of blood on one side of his face.

The girl shrank back. All the indescribable fleeting expression that he sometimes brought to her face was crystallized on it now. It was no longer possible to mistake it—that look of tragic and unconquerable terror.

What followed happened in such an instant that, though her brain registered the details, her mind could only realize them later. The gendarme, appearing from nowhere, sprang at him. Monsieur flung the thing he was carrying on to the seat of the motor, fired point blank at the man's face and leaped into the already moving car.

Though the street had seemed empty before, there were instantly two or three people, but they screamed and ran away when they saw the gendarme fall, and Marcelle, terrified, ran, too. It was instinct, not reason, that moved her, the blind instinct of a frightened animal to reach safety.

At first she ran with the others unconsciously; then something told her that might be dangerous. She was still in the blind numb grip of that overwhelming terror; it was not reason, but the merest instinct still. As one after another of the terrified group stopped running, she stopped, too.

One woman, black-haired and of stout, heavy build, ran with her for a little while, breathing heavily, gasping.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she said. "How terrible! One can see his face as he fell, *ce pauvre gendarme*, and one will see it always, like that. Just when he twisted up and fell dead. *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*"

Marcelle stared at her, mute still with her own horror. She had not yet reached

THE SMART SET

the stage when words would relieve her.

"I was on my way to see my married daughter," the woman said again, "and thinking of nothing at all; and then quite suddenly at my side the shots, and then that Apache coming out, and in a second the gendarme all twisted up and lying dead on the pavement at my feet! And you, mademoiselle, for you, too—"

The girl roused at that. Terror, sheer, horrible amazing guilt and fear, were blazoned on her face. Questions! She would be asked things that she could never answer. She would have to lie, and she cast about in her mind for some story that would account for her being there. But she could think of nothing. Her brain was a blank. Flaring across the empty sheet of it was only the sense of shock and horror of what she had just seen, and the new terrible fear of her own danger. She tried to speak, stammered, hesitated, muttered some broken words only, and stood for the fragment of a second dumb. Then, as she stood there, she saw suspicion flash into the other woman's little black eyes, and without a word the girl turned and ran away.

For an instant she thought she could hear the other woman's heavy steps lumbering after her, but it was only a figment of her own brain.

She turned and twisted and wandered for hours, it seemed, before at last she reached her garret under the leads. For a little, so, she felt safe. It seemed to her that she had come back to a familiar landmark in her life. There on the table lay a piece of finery she had decided not to wear at the last moment, and by it, her hair brush was lying where she had flung it down. Her breakfast things, unwashed, littered the table.

But the illusion of safety that these tangible things gave her was extraordinarily transient. Her mind could not fasten for long on such shadows as these real things had become. The tragedy—rapid, vital, instinct with the horror that tragedy enacted before our very eyes always brings—repeated itself over and over again on the theater of her

brain. She sat down near the table, pushing aside automatically the things that covered it, and stared dully at the wall.

She could see, far more clearly than any of the objects in front of her, the chauffeur's face as he bent to her for the message, and the fierce, determined, *dreadful* look—she could think of nothing else to describe it—that Monsieur's face had worn when he had staggered out with the box and the satchel and had fired at the gendarme. She could see him running forward, that gendarme, his stiff little figure animated by a splendid courage, and she could see again the spring he gave and the revolver fired directly in his face, and the odd, unreal way he had twisted up before he fell on the pavement.

She covered her own face with her hands as she thought of it. It seemed the culmination of all the tragedy that Monsieur should have fired at the man's face. And, striking abruptly through everything else in her thoughts, came the sound of the dead body falling back upon the pavement. . . .

After that everything that her brain gave her was sound. There was the sound of cries, a woman's voice, shrill and rather harsh, a hoarse scream that must surely have come from a man, a remembrance of a steady thumping sound which might have been the distant gendarme's running steps on the pavement, or the sound of her own heart as she ran. And through it all the low deep note of the motor rising and getting fainter as it sped away into the distance.

Then again it all cleared and she was back again in the empty street, with its double row of prim little trees and the hot smell of sunshine, and dust was in her nostrils; and she was waiting outside the blue-painted shop for the big gray car, and there was a sound of shots inside one of the houses and a big glass window cracked from side to side.

Then pitilessly the whole thing unrolled itself again with slow, horrible emphasis, omitting nothing, sparing her nothing . . .

She hid her face in her hands, her little white terrified face, but in a min-

ute she was staring through the chinks between her fingers as if they were prison bars, and seeing the whole thing happen again.

"I shall go mad if I think of it!" she said aloud.

She got up and straightened the room, but in a moment she was standing idly with a garment in her hands, in the grip of that horrible memory. It pursued her remorselessly. She wondered with a sort of dull despair if she would ever be able to escape from it again.

She tried to think of the girls of her workroom, of going to work the next day, of the episodes of the past week; but it was like the memories of childhood coming back incredibly to a very old man. It did not seem possible that her life could ever have been filled with these commonplace things, or that it ever could be again.

Then fatigue brought a merciful torpor. Her brain grew so exhausted that it could no longer torture her. Flung down on the bed, she lay with her face buried on her outstretched arms, and became quiescent, numb.

III

SHE had flung herself down as she was, and she lay so for a long time without moving. How the rest of the time passed she did not know. Late in the day she knew that she was hungry. She got up and began with dazed, automatic movements to prepare food. As she moved about, action began to kill thought and she became more nearly herself. Though she did not realize that she was afraid, she knew that she did not want to go out. But she did know that she was hungry. Arrant little primitive as she was under the thin veneer of her civilization, she forgot horror and danger itself as her teeth bit into the food. She remembered the workroom again and began to think of the girls. Tomorrow they would all be chattering of their lovers and their fiancés, and they would question and tease her, but she was not afraid. She would put them all off. In the work-

room at least Marcelle Audin could more than hold her own.

Somewhere from out across the roofs of Paris there came faintly the sound of a clock chiming—one, two, three, four, five, six.

She looked up startled. Six o'clock. It was the hour when Monsieur had told her to meet him at Notre Dame. Suddenly the submerged horror faced her again. The tragedy of murder and theft and violence came back to her with the abruptness of a blow. She shrank with horror from the thought that she could ever have been friendly with him. She could never, never see him again. She pushed away the food from her impatiently and leaned her elbows on the table. Resting her chin on her little brown hands, she stared before her.

That man! How she had allowed him to dominate her! A girl who had since left the workroom had introduced them, and though he had never spoken a word of love to her, yet he had taken her out on Thursdays four times, and his provoking mystery and striking, debonair good looks had appealed to her vanity though not to her love. She had not yet discovered that she loved herself too well for any other passion to become permanent.

And then abruptly the door opened and he came in. She sprang up, shaking, defensive. "Go away!" she said. "You are never to speak to me again. I won't have you here! How dare you come?"

The man turned round and shut the door noiselessly, and stood with his back to it. "Be quiet!" he said harshly. "Do you want the whole place to know?"

She shrank back at that, but, though she cowered away, there was something in her face that startled him, something that he had not reckoned with. He came toward her threateningly with a revolver in his hand. In the other, loosely held, she could catch the seductive glitter of diamonds.

"Now listen," he said roughly. "Be sensible and talk about it quietly."

"But you killed him!" she said. "You

are a murderer!" It was a breathless statement of the child in her.

"Yes, I killed him," he said quietly. "After all, what is life? I told you I was famous. You thought perhaps I was a poet or an artist. I am more than that. I am the man who has made all Paris tremble. I and my followers have climbed by sheer force of our strength. We are rich, famous, terrible. You are one of us now, Marcelle. You were there, too. The police do not make distinctions."

"But I am innocent," she said pitifully. "I am only a midinette. I work hard, I am honest and industrious, I have no sins; and you—"

"And I am an anarchist," he said grimly, "and an Apache. But we have been seen together in public. All the lies and all the truth in Paris couldn't save you if you were caught."

He could see the terror mounting in her as he tortured her, but he knew he had not frightened her enough yet to be sure of her. If he could only master her completely, she would be useful.

"And if you betrayed me," he said, "you would have to reckon with my followers. You would still have to reckon with us, though of course you would be safe from the police."

Suddenly her pride, that last barricade of her personality, broke down. "Let me go," she implored him. "Please, please, let me go."

He caught her by the arm and dragged her across the mean little room to the window. "I can't," he said. "It's too late. Do you see that man over there"—he pointed—"there, standing by the archway, smoking a cigarette? That's a detective. He is watching this house. He has been following me for an hour. I've done everything possible to throw him off the scent, but it's no use. One does not escape such men."

She did not know—how should she?—that the man was no detective, but a member of the band brought as a means of terrifying her into submission.

She wrenched herself away from him, and sank down by the table and hid her face, sobbing and shivering. "I am honest and poor and hard-working,"

she said, "and life is a net to a poor girl like me. But I won't be caught! I must get out! Help me to get out. Oh, you must—you must!"

So might a bird appeal when it feels in its flesh the claws of a pitiless cat. But the cat does not let go. Such appeals are part of the triumph of capture.

With a quick, dramatic movement he came close to her and held his revolver and the diamonds near her.

"Choose," he said roughly. "Don't be a fool, Marcelle. Which is it going to be?"

There was murder in his face, and for the instant the whole ugly nature of the man peered out nakedly. She was absolutely helpless in his hands and she knew it.

She stared tremblingly at the revolver in his hand and from it slowly up to his cruel, dark face.

"You couldn't—you don't mean—you are going to kill me!" Her tongue stuck fast; she could hardly speak for her agony of fear.

The man sneered at her terror. "Why not?" he said. "You wouldn't be the first. Not long ago I killed just such another as you. Like you, she knew too much to be safe. You shouldn't have waited, you know."

She made a last appeal. "Let me go," she said, "I implore you to let me go!"

For answer he only smiled mockingly and thrust his left hand, with the diamonds loosely held in it, a little nearer her.

Trembling, she reached out her hand slowly toward him and took them. Then, holding them tightly, she laid her head on her arms and broke into uncontrollable weeping.

IV

In the big bare room the girls were arriving for their day's work. In a few minutes there were fifty in their places, all chattering, all eager, all with an immense amount to discuss. As the forewoman came in they were silent to receive their instructions, but as soon as

the work was well started, the busy clatter of tongues began again.

They were all talking of their Sunday. Suzanne, the girl who sat next Marcelle, had an interminable tale and her voice ran on ceaselessly.

"And so I went off to meet him at ten o'clock," she said, "and as we went I saw a lady in a most adorable *toilette*. Not one of ours, I think, but of a most beautiful simplicity. It would have suited me, I am sure, and indeed it would be very easy to copy. Perhaps next week—"

Her thin, vain little voice ran on for a few minutes, then she stared at the girl. "You are not listening to me, mademoiselle," she said, offended.

"I—oh, *pardon*," Marcelle said quickly. "It is my work. I have come to a difficult part."

"Where was it then that you spent your Sunday?" Suzanne asked. "I passed you yesterday with a tall, handsome man, but you would not see me. I was only with Michel, a good boy but not handsome, and we both looked at you. Who was he, Marcelle?"

Suddenly there came by chance one of those pauses of sudden silence that sometimes fall on a roomful of people. It seemed to the guilty soul of Marcelle that the chatter had ceased because they were all listening to hear what she would say. She had an instant of panic, fancying that the eyes of every girl in the room were lifted from their work to stare at her. And in the awful silence and tension of that minute, she heard Suzanne repeating: "Tell us about him, Marcelle. Who is he? Where did you go yesterday? You're as mute as a mouse today. What's all the mystery about? You're not generally so fond of hiding things."

She gave one terrified glance around. When she looked at each girl in turn she could see her bending over her work, rows of them down the long tables that filled the room, but she fancied that they watched her stealthily in spite of it.

The forewoman rescued her. "You girls are talking too much over there," she said sharply. "Marcelle Audin, that sleeve is very badly done. Take it

out and do it again. For shame, chatterboxes!"

The girls bent over their work, but in a moment or two the forewoman began talking to some girls in a distant part of the room. She was telling them of the bandits' raid on a bank in the suburbs, and of the amount of money that had been taken, of the banker killed, of a clerk lying seriously wounded in one of the hospitals, and of a gendarme killed in the open street.

The forewoman enjoyed her audience, and held the workgirls enthralled with a vivid picture of the outrage gathered from a morning paper. One girl after another held her needle suspended in the air as she listened with horror, excitement or pity.

"And as always—no trace," the forewoman ended. "All that money gone, those lives finished, and from the moment the big gray car shot away into the distance—nothing! I tell you, the police do not know anything. And they will know nothing until the next outrage. And next time—who knows?—it may be you or I. These Apaches have terrified all Paris."

Suzanne turned to Marcelle. "Well, for my part I think they have a clue this time," she said. "Michel is in the police, you know, and he told me they knew something. There is a photograph, I think, and they say there was a woman who waited, a confederate. I think myself that they know more than they say. I believe they are only waiting their time to spring. *Mon Dieu!* I would not like to be that woman!"

Marcelle could feel it coming nearer, that first faint horrible suspicion—so faint at first that it was negligible, yet clinging and growing like some horrible poisonous thing that would in the end choke the very life out of her.

Suzanne's Michel was in the police! Was it possible that he was the force behind Suzanne's twittering questions? Was all this probing talk not so idle as it sounded?

She glanced sidelong at her, trembling, and then quickly away. The girl's black eyes were watching her, and there was a stealthy glitter in them. She

tried to sew, to continue her work, but under that furtive gaze she could not. Her hands were all numb and stiff and wet with the tension of her horror. She wiped them lest she soil the fabric of the great lady's dress on which she was at work, and the intensity of their clay-cold inertness was a shock. They felt dead. They did not feel part of her any more, but horribly, physically dead.

Suzanne began again, still with her little glittering black eyes fixed on Marcelle: "Michel has an aunt in that street. We nearly went there yesterday, he and I. Only think how horrible it would have been! You were not so very far from there when we saw you, Marcelle. Did you see anything of it?"

She could not answer. Her fear rose, choking her, fear that her clay-cold hands were only a symbol, and that the net spread for her was already being drawn, that she had no possible chance to escape.

She put up her hands to her throat and pulled at the collar of her dress. She could see the girls staring at her and the forewoman moving across to her; perhaps she was even speaking, but the sense of words did not come to her. She could see again horribly against the drab background of the workroom the whole scene of the outrage, and feel herself waiting again outside the little blue-painted shop for the gray car. And through it all she could hear, in the atmosphere of silence that her own fear created in her brain, the girl's words: "The police have a clue . . . a woman . . . they are only waiting their time to spring."

She knew now she could no longer hope to hide her terror from them all. She knew that she was standing up in her place and that everyone was staring at her. She could feel that her eyes were staring, her face distorted. She could feel the labor of her own breath.

Again under the spell of fear the shallow veneer of civilization dropped away from her. The wit and knowledge of the Paris that she knew had taught her nothing that could help her now. She did not try to explain her terror because that side of her brain was numb.

She put her hand to her face to shut out those terrible rows of suspicious faces, and stumbled across the room to the door. Halfway across she spoke.

"May I go home?" she said. "I must—go home."

She did not know if the forewoman answered her or not. Blindly she made for the door, groped for the handle and stumbled downstairs into the silver gray light of a Paris morning. But though she had escaped those watching, curious eyes, she could not escape from her own fear.

That clung to her, haunting her, polluting her. She forgot everything but her terror—she forgot even her own innocence. In her brain, like a torturing poisonous shaft, there rankled the remembrance of what the girl had said: "The police have a clue . . . a woman . . . they are only waiting to spring."

V

SHE turned straight toward her room under the leads with the homing instinct of a wild creature, but as she went her terror translated itself from the mental to the bodily plane. With the remembrance of the suspicion that she had read into the faces of the workgirls, she saw suspicion in the glances of the passers-by. She made desperate, violent efforts to recapture the normal in her appearance and her walk, but she felt with mounting terror that people either stared at her openly or watched her secretly. She did not know that it was only her own sense of guilt that produced it; the horror was as keen as if it were founded upon reality.

She left the big crowded street and turned into a little side one that was almost deserted, but here her instinct for terror betrayed her again. In a moment she had picked out from the clatter of steps on the pavement one that was following her. She turned up a side street, making a wide détour, and doubled back to familiar streets, but she could not be sure that she had escaped those following feet. Once they sounded close. She looked round quickly, but

she could see nothing. Then she drew back trembling against a wall, but nothing passed her. The following feet had stopped, too, and after a few minutes she hurried on again. But the long gray street had become a trap. She hurried along it with frightened glances, whimpering a little because she felt so horribly alone.

After an hour she grew very tired, and as she came close to the narrow street where she lived she suddenly remembered the man who watched her home—the man who had tracked Monsieur. She dared not go back there. She would have given anything in the world to know if the man was still there watching, but she could not bring herself to the point of finding out.

She had a little money in her purse, a few sous only, but she was so tired she felt she must rest. She turned back again to find a café, and sitting back withdrawn as far as possible from the street, she sipped her coffee and broke her bread.

The coffee restored her powers. She reviewed the position with the remorseless logic and ready fatalism of her class. "I'm in a mess and I've got to get out of it," she thought. "There's nobody to help—there never is. But all the same I've got to get out—or go under."

If she could have seen her own face in a mirror then, she would not have thought so boldly. Her weak white face, with its shallowness and its vanity and its overwhelming distorting terror, was not the face of one who would ever get out.

She knew she was in his power. She was in it so completely that the very thought of his strength and his remorselessness paralyzed her. He had said he was famous, and she had guessed that he was perhaps an artist or a poet, and her vanity was pleased that she could inspire such a man. When he had told her that all Paris talked of him, she had little thought how bitterly and how cruelly his words were true. Paris had talked of his outrages, and would talk even after the man himself was dead.

At the next table they were talking of

him at the moment—a couple of men taking an *apéritif*.

"Of course what we hope for is betrayal," one of them said. "A man like that must have enemies. Have you seen the offer we have made this morning?"

"Oh, that betrayal for a price!" the other man said impatiently. "I haven't any faith in that. There are cases, I grant you, where it might work, but here you must remember we are dealing with a criminal of personality. He hasn't only brains—he has character. Men like that don't get betrayed. Their followers would die for them, but never betray them. I grant you, of course, that in your department success has occasionally followed such bribes, but personally I attribute that—"

The other man answered him courteously but Marcelle could not catch what he said. Like a flash she realized that these men were officials of some branch of the detective service or *gendarmerie*, and that they were discussing the chances of the betrayal of Monsieur. It was her chance of escape. A word to them and she would be free from his horrible influence forever.

Not that she reasoned really as much as that. Her instinct leaped—while all her senses and her emotions were imprisoned and numbed by the tremendous tension of her fear—to the vital issue of the chance that had led her there, and that had flung her by hazard at the feet of the very men who could save her.

And yet perhaps, caution urged her, it would be safer not to speak. Perhaps, after all, she had escaped attention in the dusty little street on Sunday morning. After all, it might be safer to say nothing.

But in the very midst of her indecisive swaying to and from the issue, there flared into her mind the picture of the big workroom and the rows of girls listening to the story of the outrage, and of herself, cold and shaking and guilty, stealthily wiping the sweat from her cold hands, and stealing terrified glances at the girls round her—glances that she felt must have betrayed her.

She remembered how she had risen in

her place with her hands pressed to her head and stumbled toward the door muttering that she must go—that they must let her go.

She felt that she could never go back there again. She did not know what was going to happen to her in the future, but she knew that when that door shut behind her it was final. She could never go back.

She was sure that they must guess something. They knew Monsieur, those girls. She had met some of them when she was out with him. There were a hundred roads to suspicion and danger, and action alone could save her. If only she knew what to do!

She was still indecisive when the elder of the two men pushed his chair back, laid some money on the table and quickly—incredibly swiftly it seemed to the girl—left the café and with his friend joined the people in the street.

As they rose from the table one of the men spoke.

"Personally," he said, "I put great stress on the fact of the woman's presence. They have not used women in their operations before. You can deduce a lot from that. Also this time we have a clue. But, apart from all that, women are so much easier to trace than men. There is no doubt of that. So many recent cases prove it."

They were already passing out of earshot, but she sprang up and ran to them. They were standing on the edge of the pavement, and one of them had his hand on the open door of a taxicab.

"Monsieur," she said breathlessly, "pardon—I have something to say to you if you will permit me."

The younger man turned coldly. "I think you have made a mistake," he said, and made a gesture to his companion to get into the car.

But Marcelle had not knocked about the workrooms of Paris without learning how to take a rebuff.

"It is urgent business," she said quickly. "Sunday morning—the bank outrage."

The elder man stared at her for the fraction of a second, and then thrust her into the cab and got in after her. He

murmured an address through the speaking tube and then turned to the girl.

She gave a little terrified gasp before she spoke. "It is I, monsieur', for whom you are looking," she said. "It was I who gave the message to the driver of the gray car."

VI

SHE told them everything, and she was surprised, when she came to tell it, how much there was. She picked out his photograph from a pile. She told them of his haunts, of tiny things she had noticed, of a hundred minute points in the mystery of his identity. She herself had been able to deduce nothing from these scattered hints of his personality, but these men with their vast science of deduction and construction could build up the very fabric of the man himself from her eager, halting, stumbling sentences.

While she talked she stood before them in the office, her small brown hands folded meekly before her, her head, with its crown of uncovered brown hair, thrown well back. For the moment the look of fear was gone, lifted, and the transient, elusive charm of her youth shone out.

Then abruptly the betrayal was over, and someone had opened the door for her and she was out again in the fresh-scented air of Paris. For safety's sake they had let her out by a side door in the great building, one which led into a high-walled, nearly deserted alley. She came out into the sunshine with almost all the old sense of gaiety and safety. She had told them everything, and in return they had promised her protection and money. Even Monsieur himself could not frighten her much now.

She heard the door behind her shut sonorously, and she waited a moment poised in the shadow of the great building while she took her bearings. Then lifting her trim skirts away from the dust of the road, she stepped briskly toward her humble street.

As she did so a figure moved cautiously from the shadow of an angle in the wall. The man wore a blue blouse and was powerfully built, but in spite of his clumsy size, he moved with the stealth and agility of a cat. Twice Marcelle caught the sound of his following steps, and twice she half turned. The third time she saw him, and his heavy face and cruel, sullen eyes checked her assurance abruptly. She did not know that she had any reason to fear him, but she recognized the criminal type, and it flung her back abruptly to the danger she had escaped.

But she owned to herself that the danger was gone. To free herself from even the shadow of it, she turned into a street of great shops and stared at the things displayed. True midinette as she was, it was the clothes and the jewels that alone attracted her, the outer luxuries of a life that she only knew indirectly through her work. In the window of a great shop she recognized a dress that she had been working on herself a week ago. It gave her a childish sense of happiness that she could have helped to make anything so beautiful.

Her mind repeated fragments of the scene of betrayal. There was one set of questions that haunted her. They had asked her for details of the rest of the band, for names and so forth, and she had answered that she did not know. Then, with the assured air of one who does not question the certainty of a reply, they had said: "And the name of the other woman?"

And she had said again: "I do not know, but I think there were no other women. There was only myself."

She could see now the man's stare of amazement. "There were no other women?" he said. "And yet you have come to us! Why?"

There in the office, wrapped in the sudden sense of security, she had to think before she could understand him. She had answered him quite simply: "Because I was so afraid, monsieur". It frightened me. I am a midinette and hard-working and careful, and he made me afraid."

But here in the sunshine she could

laugh at the questions. She knew that they thought she loved him. She—Marcelle Audin—to love an Apache! She gave her quick, mocking, enigmatic smile as she even thought of it. Then abruptly she caught the gleam of diamonds in the window of a jeweler's shop, and she remembered the bracelet he had brought her on that black Sunday evening. Her smile froze. She had not told the men of the diamonds, and she knew that she would never tell them. She would keep them and wear them in secret. And with the thought of those guilty diamonds came back the sudden sense of fear. She had not escaped him. She knew it now. To betray such a man is not to escape him—it is to put yourself inevitably in his power. She remembered with horrible vivid clarity the expression he had used to her that night: "If you betray me to the police you'll save your skin with them, but you'll have to reckon with the gang."

Suddenly it seemed as if the betrayal were the maddest risk of all. The old sense of choking terror rose in her a hundredfold more strong than ever. Again the youth and the charm of her slipped away under the terrible influence of her fear, and she was just a haggard little seamstress slipping through the maze of Paris streets dogged by the most horrible terror.

But as she hurried along, slipping nimbly in and out of the crowds, a figure in a blue blouse followed her quietly and steadily, the figure of a man with a sullen, low-browed face and cruel, furtive eyes. Such men do not lose their trail.

VII

ALL that day and the next her terror lasted. She could not bring herself to go out. She imprisoned herself in her tiny room, and cooked and mended and brooded and slept; but though she hated the shut-in life, she could not bring herself to face the streets. She did not look forward much. She was of the class that lives in the present. She had money, and she supposed that there would come a time when the police took

him, and then she would be safe. For the present she had money and food. That was enough.

Then one evening her youth surged up in her alive. The sunshine and the movement of the streets became a lure. Her terrors died down as her mind became filled with other things, and as they did so her room became a cell. She ran lightly down the common staircase and out into the street.

It was evening and the gay life of the town was in full swing. The lamps were lit down the wide streets and the kiosks glowed at the edges of the pavements. Motors purred and throbbed among the traffic, giving instantaneous glimpses of the gay world before they shot away. The cafés were full, and here and there one caught the thrill of music—a half-phrase perhaps, scarcely caught among the clatter and clangor of the streets.

It seemed that all Paris was out that night. The intoxication of it all, after her imprisonment in her room, swept into her little tawdry soul. She breathed deep, snuffing up the very scent of the streets, the subtle, characteristic smell of Paris, as if it were the very soul of perfume. She met a workgirl she knew, and they sat together in one of the cafés and watched the pageant of the streets. Later they strolled on chatting. Over the Moulin Rouge the red-lit arms of the little mill were turning gaily and the street seemed a flare of light and color.

Abruptly Marcelle remembered, with a flash of terror, that it was Thursday—Monsieur's night for taking her out; and that it was quite a possibility that he would be here in the crowd—that she might conceivably have the horror of meeting him—the shadowy terrible man whom she had betrayed.

As the horror of it came over her she stopped still, ashen gray and fearful. She felt that he was somewhere in that gay, chattering crowd, and that in a moment she must hear his voice at her elbow and see his haggard, handsome face looking down at her with mocking eyes. Perhaps he would give her a look which would show her that he knew everything. . . .

It was too much for her, that thought

of his presence. Wordlessly—without so much as a dumb look to her companion—she broke through the crowd and ran away.

It was easy to lose oneself in those thickly peopled streets. She did not actually run more than a few steps. After that she hurried along, stumbling and dodging, trying to escape.

She got away from the crowd as quickly as she could, and slipped into the dark maze of streets. So, she felt safer, more in touch with her surroundings, a shadowy, furtive figure in the half-dark, among other lurking shadows who were perhaps like herself guilty men and women—murky creatures who shunned the light.

She had quite lost her sense of innocence now. She had, as it were, forgotten that she was almost unconcerned with the outrage. The betrayal had wiped out all that. She had betrayed the man, not because she felt it to be right, or from any high motive, but simply because she was afraid. And, by the mere action of betrayal from fear, she had put herself on a level with these lower creatures.

It was perhaps an effort to attain the more normal poise that made her speak to the *concierge* while she waited at the bottom of the long flight of common stairs that led to her garret.

"No one has asked for me, madame?" she asked idly—she who had scarcely a friend now in all Paris.

The woman shook her head. No—there had been no one.

Just for a second that made her feel safe, and she nodded good night almost gaily as she went upstairs. Outside her door she stopped, breathless with the long ascent, and then slowly fitted her key into the lock. As she opened the door she glanced instinctively round the room. There was a flicker of light from the landing, and she could see that on the table lay a letter—something that had not been there when she went out.

She knew, even before she tore it open, who had sent it. Inside it were a few lines with neither beginning nor signature.

I told you to choose. You have done so. Before, you had only to elude the police. Now you have to reckon with me. I am more terrible than the most terrible law, because I know no mercy. From me there is no escape.

As she read it she sank down by the table, staring. It was authentic, that. Though it was unsigned, she could not question it. It bore the absolute stamp of Monsieur himself—of the man who could draw himself up proudly, and striking his breast, say: "*Oui—je suis anarchiste—je suis Apache!*!" and in the face of such murders as his, could boast: "All Paris—all the world—talks of me. I am famous."

She stared at the letter, shuddering. With her whole soul she recoiled from even the thought of the man, but all the same, his personality overwhelmed her like a flood of foul water. She sank under the immersion. She knew that if he had sworn to kill her he would do so, and that she would not have the chance to escape. But he had not done that. More cruel, more subtle than that, he had tortured her with the fear of an unknown terror.

She glanced back over the last week, and was amazed at the cruel way in which he had wrecked her life. If he could use her so pitilessly when he owed her nothing, what would he do to her when he knew what she had done?

She looked wildly round the room, glancing over her shoulder and panting. All the haunting, disembodied fears which she had fought off, returned like a flock of carrion birds and clustered about her. She felt that if he could elude the *concierge* and steal up to her room like a thief, he might be still lurking somewhere about the room or the passages, mocking her agony.

She sprang up with shaking limbs and began to search the room. There was scarcely room for a cat to hide in the poor little place, but she felt that he could not be far away. When she had been over everything, there was the sound of a step on the staircase outside. She sprang up, and flung herself at the door with a convulsive movement of terror, and wrestled with the lock with cold, shaking hands. But even when

the footsteps passed her door and went to another room, it did not calm her. All those seeds of creeping fear that he had sown were springing up in her alive.

VIII

THE next night she woke suddenly. There was no moon, but there were perhaps stars, because a faint glimmer was reflected in one-half of the room. The other half lurked in shadow. She had perhaps been dreaming, because in her brain ran the words of his letter: ". . . no mercy. From me there is no escape."

She did not know if the words were only in her brain or were actually still echoing in the black air, but the sheer terror of them roused her. She sprang suddenly out of bed and felt in the blackness for the door. She had a sudden swift, unreasoning knowledge that she was not alone in the room, and that if she could only hold her breath she would be able to hear the sound of the other's breathing.

But her terror was such that it overmastered her physically. She could not hold her breath. It panted in great gasps. Her heart, too, beat thickly in her throat—the throb of it seemed all over her. She made a wild movement, staring at the black dark all the time, and fell over something—a box perhaps—on the floor.

The crash reverberated in the grim, horrible silence. She did not know or realize that she had fallen over anything. She thought that something in the black darkness had tripped her, and she knew that she fell. She leaped up, too terrified to realize pain, but it had its effect on her mentally. She put out her hands to shield her from the pursuing thing, and sprang across the room in a desperate effort to escape; and in the movement she caught a gray glimpse of something alive that moved across the other side of the room. It was such an infinitesimal flash of sight that she did not know it was only the reflection of her own pallid figure in her little dressing mirror.

As she sprang away from it, she caught her foot in the trailing bedclothes and fell again heavily, striking herself against a piece of furniture. She could hear something fall with a crash of broken crockery, but the sound of that was lost in her screams.

She tried to get up, but she could not. She recognized pain—sudden vivid, incredible pain—pain that terrified. For a second it wiped out everything, then she heard steps outside. She rose staggering and sank back, too utterly in the grip of her own fear to reason. Then, with a spasmodic effort, she stumbled to the window. As she gripped the sill of it, she felt as if the thing that lurked in the back of the room had decided to spring again, and that now if ever she must escape. She dragged herself to a sitting position on the ledge of the window and fumbled with the catch.

There were voices outside in the passage, men's voices and a woman's, but she had reached the very mania of fear when all voices had become to her Monsieur's, and the very sound of them shook her.

She wrenched the window open, flinging herself against it because it was stiff. The people in the passage were knocking at the door and shouting messages of help, and the sound of them made her scream again. The crash of

their blows in the silence of the night seemed tremendous. She knelt on the outside edge of the window sill, clinging for an instant to the woodwork. She felt that she had only an instant to save herself. Once the door should give way . . .

She was standing now crouched on the little narrow sill. Six floors below her on the stones a gray cat ran across the street. She did not even see it, because she was so afraid that she was blind to the happenings of the real world. She could see only her own fear.

Crash—went the knockings on the door again, and mingled with it, the kindly French voices, coming, as they thought, to her rescue. One of them—the concierge perhaps—shook the door, and the rickety woodwork cracked. It was very old.

As they burst it open, she jumped. They could hear her scream as she fell, a short scream that stopped abruptly before she reached earth. They thought perhaps she died then, before she reached the cruel gray stones.

But in the room, though they searched closely, they could find nothing—except that in a corner there was a torn and crumpled sheet of paper with some words on it: "You have escaped the police . . . from me there is no escape." But that they could not understand. So they threw it away.



ALL men are proud of their children. They are proud of their own wives.

Some men carry egoism so far that they



THE prude's version of the seventh commandment: Thou shalt not commit a statutory offense.



WIFE—a former sweetheart.

NATIONAL DRAMA

By George Jean Nathan

BRITISH

CAST

SIR RONALD TREVELYAN, BART.
LADY TREVELYAN
ARTHUR TREVELYAN (*their adopted son*)
NEVILLE HILLARY, Q. C., M. P.
THE REVEREND ALFRED GRAVESHORNE (*curate of St. Stephens*)
LADY ASHBY MONCRIEF
DIANA CRAVENSHAW (*clerk at Selfridge's*)
PERKINS (*butler to SIR RONALD*)
ANDREWS (*butler to LADY MONCRIEF*)
MORSE (*butler to HILLARY*)
ROBERTS (*servant to ARTHUR*)
MUGGINS (*servant to DIANA*)
JENKINS (*butler to PERKINS*)

The scene is laid principally in London; the first and third acts at MR. HILLARY's flat in Grafton Street, the second at LADY MONCRIEF'S house, "Willywolly," Sussex, in November of the following year.

FRENCH

CAST

CASIMIR ANDRAUX
HENRI (*his son*)
LUCIENNE (*his daughter*)
JACQUES POISETTE (*a wealthy manufacturer*)
MARCELLE POISETTE (*his tubercular wife*)
THE ABBÉ D'ARBOIS
PIERRE VALOIS (*an under secretary at the Academy*)
LIEUTENANT WOLFGANG (*a German spy*)

The scene is laid principally in Paris; the first act in M. ANDRAUX'S library, the second in MME. MARCELLE POISETTE'S boudoir at midnight, the third in a small town near the German frontier.

AMERICAN

CAST

JUDGE ROGER HAMBURTON (*of the Supreme Court*)
JUDSON TELFAIR (*of TELFAIR & Co., brokers*)
JAMES C. REYNOLDS (*president of the First National Bank*)
ARTHUR REYNOLDS (*his son*)

THE SMART SET

BAXTER (*a warden*)DICK TRAVERS (*a young lawyer*)SILENT SAM (*a stool pigeon*)WHITE, SMITH, O'BRIEN, MURPHY, CLANCY (*detectives*)MAGGIE REILLY (*a stenographer at TELFAIR & Co's.*)

MRS. REYNOLDS

MIRIAM REYNOLDS (*her daughter*)ALICE ADDLEBY (*MIRIAM's chum*)

The scene is laid principally in New York at the present time; the first act at REYNOLDS's residence at No. 18 Gramercy Park West, the second in the brokerage offices of TELFAIR & Co., at No. 49 Wall Street, and the third in the warden's office at Sing Sing Prison.

RUSSIAN

CAST

MISHA VASALENAVITCH KLOOGLOSEVTLOFF (*a retired professor*)ANNA VLADIMIROVITCH KLOOGLOSEVTLOFF (*his wife*)ANDRIEVA, ELIZAVETA, MARINA, MARFA, VARVANA, BINGA,
MASKA, GINKA, PAULINA (*his daughters*)VOLGUTZ, SAVEL, KULIGIN, ZOWIE, BORIS, CONSTANTIN, ALEXIS,
IVAN (*his sons*)MICHAILOWSKY ALEXANDROVITCH DISTCHEFF (*his wife's brother*)ASTROFF LEONIDITCH ZOWSKI (*his first cousin*)MARINA KONSTANTINOVA PETRISHTSHEFF (*his second cousin*)BIMBOFF (*his third cousin*)BUTKEVITCH SPIFF KOKOKLINGHIN (*his wife's stepuncle*)KUDRASH ILIA ASTERIKA (*his grandfather*)DMITRI BINGHOFF KOROTSKOFF (*his half-brother*)NASTASYA PAULOVITCH VITCH (*his great-aunt*)LEONIDAS DOSTEVSKI KLISHAVITCH (*his wife's brother-in-law*)FEODOR PAULOVITCH SONOFF (*his doctor*)KLINGHOFF ABREZKOFF STATCHOFF (*his wife's doctor*)PISHKIN etc., DLTHIDOR etc., BORAPATIKIN etc. (*other doctors*)GAMBOFF, PISH, KUDRASH, GREGORIVITCH (*epileptics*)SERGIUS VODKAROFF (*chief of police*)DIAPERA (*an old nurse*)

Barons, counts, princes, butlers, butlers' assistants, lackeys, coachmen, cooks, valets, privy councillors, ministers, officers of police, secretaries, lawyers, etc., etc.

The entire action is laid in the drawing room of the country home of the KLOOGLOSEVTLOFFS, near Moscow.

The stage manager is supposed to notify the audience when the play is over.

SCANDINAVIAN

CAST

COUNTESS CHRISTINA

AUGUST (*a garbage hauler*)

The action passes in the coal cellar of a castle on St. John's Eve.

THE GOLDEN RAT

By Alexander Harvey

WHAT secret of her troubled soul could the youthful and lovely Miss Lancaster be concealing now from me? She was decidedly the most baffling of all my patients. I was comparatively young, as men in the professions reckon age, yet I had devoted eleven arduous years to the practice of that department of psychology which goes by the name of psycho-analysis. It seemed obvious, from the very first appearance of the lady in my consultation room, that she suffered from the shock of an underlying emotional disturbance. Miss Lancaster, that is to say, had passed through a painful experience. She had striven to banish it from her consciousness.

Now what had been the emotional disturbance in her case? I could but conjecture vaguely. Her experience, whatever it had been, was not extinguished. It remained latent in her subconsciousness, buried below the level of her waking mentality. The case of Miss Lancaster was, to use the technical phraseology, one of repression, the experience or emotion which she strove to put out of her mind and her life being what we psychologists call a "complex."

As I concentrated my gaze upon the large but troubled eyes of Miss Lancaster, it dawned upon me that the "complex"—the idea or sorrow she strove to annihilate—was emotional, sentimental. Had she formed some unhappy attachment which the fiercest efforts of her will failed to subdue? I made the suggestion which seemed to me the best possible in the circumstances.

"I shall have to hypnotize you."

Speaking in the fluted accents which made her voice harmonize so perfectly

with the sweetness of her face, Miss Lancaster objected to the very idea. She declined to be hypnotized because she feared the process might undermine the strength of her will. It was not difficult to reassure her on this point. To my surprise, however, I found my patient absolutely unhypnotizable. There remained only the alternative of imploring her to tell me frankly all that was in her mind, all that might be below the level of her consciousness, all that she would hide even from herself.

"I fear," I remarked, as considerately as I could—"I fear you are concealing something from me—something of which you do not perhaps realize the importance or even the nature."

She searched her memory in vain. I had, on the occasion of our last interview in my study, forborne to press her. It was my hope that in the course of a subsequent consultation I should elicit the mysterious cause of her nervous state.

How well I remember that summer afternoon! Miss Lancaster had taken her departure, and I stood absorbed in baffling reflections with reference to this most mysterious patient. Slowly, at last, I opened the door that afforded access to the garden stretching from my study window quite to the stables. The garden, like the stables themselves, was a luxury, a whim of mine. The value of improved real estate in my native city made the taxes upon my cultivated acres anything but a trifle. I might have kept a motor car, but my love of horseflesh made it impossible to give up the stables for a garage.

"More rats, Doctor."

It was Boggs, the grim coachman. I

found him rubbing down the most spirited of the steeds behind which it pleased me to spin through the streets of the city. Boggs indicated a pail near one of the stalls.

I gazed vacantly at the nestful of tiny young rats. My mind was still absorbed by the repressed "complex" of the puzzling Miss Lancaster. I still stared at the seven blind, feeble creatures, too young for even a growth of hair to be manifest upon their hides. Boggs had stepped over to my side by this time. He clutched the nozzle of a streaming line of hose.

"I'll drown 'em, drat 'em!"

He would have flooded the wriggling nestful in a trice had I not stayed his hand.

"That little fellow there," I remarked—"he looks different—lighter than the others."

Boggs peered down into the bottom of the pail.

"Yes, Doctor," he conceded, his voice thick with the disgust and annoyance the sight of rats in the stables invariably caused him. "One there is yellow-like."

To the amazement of the honest Boggs, I plunged my hand among the young rats and picked up the specimen that had caught my eye. There he lay now, in the palm of my hand, blind, weak, helpless. The hairs upon his odd little frame were sparse. They were sufficiently thick, none the less, to impart an aspect of fluffy gold to his coat. I was half inclined to drop him to his doom among his brothers when his tiny tail waved vaguely. It was covered nearly to the tip with a growth of down that made it look like a golden wand. Before Boggs had closed his mouth from sheer wonder at my behavior, I had slipped the baby rat into a pocket of my coat.

Slowly I retraced my steps across the grass from the stables to the study door. I was in some perplexity. Should I risk an experiment with the tiny thing breathing still in my pocket? The query vexed me as I paced from the desk in my little study to the door of the laboratory beyond. In this laboratory were stored the test tubes, the culture me-

diums, the beef broth and the apparatus for clarifying and sterilizing through the medium of which I enlarged the range of my biological knowledge by artificial cultivation of bacteria. Here, too, were the cages in which, at one time, I had bred three generations of white mice. The creatures were all dead long since. I was quite an adept, however, in the care of these rodents. Many a specimen had been inoculated in this laboratory with "cultures" of my own.

Lifting the little rat from my pocket, I laid him, seemingly more dead than alive, in one of my small cages. A spirit lamp had next to be set afame. With its aid I soon heated enough milk to fill a small bottle, from the corked neck of which protruded a tiny quill. The little rat absorbed the first meal I gave him greedily enough. I had the satisfaction of seeing him curled snugly in sleep upon a litter of scrapped rags before the milk was half consumed.

Many days had not elapsed before I saw the hair upon his coat grow sleek and plentiful. To my surprise, the yellowish tint which had first attracted my attention to the young rat deepened into one of fine gold before I possessed him a week. In a fortnight he was strong enough to climb the side of the box which was his home in my laboratory. He ran about the floor so recklessly that I was forced to keep a careful lookout for stray cats and dogs. My original fear that he would prefer the freedom of the open air or of the cellarage to my laboratory proved groundless. He seemed to be destitute of the quality of timidity. Never in my experience of pets had I acquired one so recklessly tame. It was a source of perennial delight to him to spring from my shoe to the hem of my trousers and climb up to my shoulder. There he remained perched contentedly while I read or wrote or even walked about. As day succeeded day, the exquisite golden color of his coat grew richer. I discovered his tastes in edibles, especially for roasted chestnuts, and gratified it to the full. He seemed to tire of bread and milk as he grew fatter and more golden of hue. I fed him upon cake and nuts. His place of refuge,

when pressed for one, was the pocket of my coat. Again and again have I felt him stirring about there while I received a patient in my study. When we were left at last alone, he would peep forth prettily and give a little shriek of delight while returning to my shoulder.

Never was quadruped more careful of its personal appearance. The golden rat balanced itself on its hind legs to lick its belly clean, and it had a trick of wiping itself all over with its forepaws. One of these paws would be passed over the head and the ears and licked into an immaculate cleanliness at each wipe. Philander, for that was the name I bestowed upon the golden rat, was a dazzling spectacle when the light from my study lamp fell upon him. He slept for an hour at a time on the desk before which I sat to read, seeming motionless, a gleaming ornament that might have come in perfect beauty from the cunning of the hand of Benvenuto Cellini.

Philander was washing his golden coat as he sat on my shoulder one morning, when we were interrupted by the unexpected arrival of a patient. The rat—he was a good-sized animal now—took refuge in my pocket the instant old Pawkins was announced. Pawkins, I should explain, was one of the prominent bankers of the city, who had long been under my care because of his neurasthenia. It had not been easy for me in the beginning to trace the source of his disorder. It seemed due primarily to an idea implanted in his mind by the physician who first treated his symptoms. Pawkins had been told that he was threatened with Bright's disease. He had seized this diagnosis eagerly. His ailment was, on its physical side, solely due to a false suggestion. Unfortunately, however, I found it no easy matter to win my way to his confidence. There was in his mind, latent and unconquerable, a suppressed "complex," an idea he would not avow, a thought that held him prisoner. No effort of mine could bring it to the surface. In accordance with my practice, I did not force the revelation I sought from old Pawkins. I was content to bide my

time, as I was biding my time with Miss Lancaster.

The elderly financier had barely seated himself in a chair facing me when I got a sudden fright. It seemed as if he had brought a dog with him. I thought of Philander in my pocket and had difficulty in suppressing an impulse of alarm. A closer inspection of the crouching figure at the feet of old Pawkins sufficed to correct my blunder. It was no dog that sat so near him. It was rather a shadowy outline than a reality, a suggestion of a shape. As I gazed the thing seemed to be a wolf—or shall I say the wraith of a wolf? A minute or two elapsed before I could withdraw my gaze from what I felt now must be a spectre. I had seen what was too evidently a ghost, for when I dropped my eyes once more to the floor the thing had disappeared.

It was easy enough to get rid of old Pawkins after a few perfunctory questions. When he had taken his departure, I gave myself up to a profound reverie. Philander had emerged from his retreat and was gorging himself on the floor with roasted chestnuts. It was borne in upon me at this moment, for the first time, that some connection must exist between the golden rat and a series of emotional and physical experiences and sensations in myself. I asked myself if the golden rat had not communicated to me the symptoms of that fevered state in which I now so often found myself. The state was one of exhilaration—like the first effects of some delightful stimulant. It was an exhilaration which wore away. It left, unlike the thrills that go with opium, no baneful consequences. It brought me a singular capacity to verify with my own eye—at intervals—the fact that practically all sources of illumination emit an ultra-violet light playing no part in ordinary vision. This is the result of the circumstance that the eye is sensitive only to a small proportion of the radiation reaching it. There were times, however, when my eye became for the nonce camera-like, detecting and measuring the intensity of what physicists call the infra-red or heat rays. I could see at such times by the aid of a

light which physicists have pronounced invisible or at least discernible only through photography.

It occurred to me, after the departure of old Pawkins, that the wolf I had seen at his feet was an optical eccentricity in me. I recalled just then a fit of trembling in Philander while he lay concealed in my pocket. I recalled, too, the peculiarities of his conduct when certain other patients were in my study. The golden rat was subject to an inexplicable panic whenever the wife of a certain clergyman poured the tale of her neurosis into my ear. Philander took refuge under a bookcase or in the remotest recesses of a drawer in my desk. My eye chanced to light upon his frolicking form as I pondered these things. He held a walnut in his forepaws and, perched upon his hind limbs like an educated poodle, was devouring the morsel greedily. I waited until he had satisfied his appetite and then called him by his name. In a trice he was upon my shoulder.

The exigencies of a laboratory experiment that day required the use of a pair of black silk gloves. These were in my lap. The rat was creeping around my neck as I drew one of these gloves over my left hand, fitting it snugly and carefully from force of habit, although my mind was engaged solely with the mystery of the Pawkins wolf. On a sudden I saw a minute speck moving against the blackness of the glove. It was a mere mite of a speck, but it shone in golden luster as it flitted and fluttered.

II

THE darting and dancing mite in the palm of my gloved hand was a flea.

A flood of light was let into every nook and cranny of my mind the moment I had caught the golden insect on the tip of my finger with the aid of a dab of vaseline. Philander, then, was infested with fleas. They were like himself in their peculiarly golden aspect. I brought the rat from his place of rest on my shoulder down to my knee. The critical inspection of his fur to which I abandoned my-

self—not neglecting a microscope in the process—revealed a quantity of golden fleas. I was unable to identify the species. It is true that the varieties of flea already classified are infinite. I had studied a few in my student days. Here was a species as new as it was strange. There could be no doubt that the fleas on Philander had been the agents of the spread of some infection to me. My symptoms of late had been very puzzling.

I was quite certain that Philander could not have imparted to me the bacillus of any infection so dire as plague. That dread disease appears only in fleas which have bitten affected rats or persons at least twelve hours prior to death. The organism causing the disease itself must exist for a certain interval in the body of Philander, there to undergo a definite alteration, before it could induce an infection in me by transmission through the flea. And there was no known case of plague affecting a human being sufficiently near to involve Philander in the slightest suspicion.

The dilemma of my situation seemed greater on the following morning. I found my fever slightly higher, although the exhilaration was quite pleasant. I observed an accentuation of the eccentricity of my vision. I detected ultraviolet light without the aid of an instrument. There was one close friend to whom I could turn in this crisis. Having ascertained over the telephone that Thorburn, the renowned specialist, who had been my classmate at the medical school, could receive me at once, I hastened to his office.

My brilliant friend, whose researches in microbiology fill the world with his fame, had a touch or two of gray at the temples, I noticed. He received me most effusively, for we had not met in a long time. My eye was held for a minute, as we shook hands, by the large stork standing gravely at Thorburn's side.

"Are you fond of storks?"

I asked the question smilingly. He looked at me in some surprise.

"Not particularly," he replied. "Why?"

It flashed through my mind at once that this bird by Thorburn's side was no

more real than the wolf at Pawkins's feet.

"Why?" I repeated, a flash of inspiration rescuing me from the dilemma. "You have been married six years and you have no children."

His face clouded at once.

"You are a great psychologist," I heard him murmur, as if he were talking to himself. "You have guessed the longing that fills my heart, the preoccupation of my life."

I saw now what the stork meant. It was the symbol of the desire in my friend's heart, the thought that would not leave him, the longing he had put out of his mind. His wish for a child to bless his union with Florella had been put from the upper level of his consciousness into that lower level of forgetfulness where his "repressed complex" lay buried. All men living, I knew, bore in their minds the wishes, the aspirations, they had buried in the well of the subconsciousness. Not until this moment did I suspect that the longing buried in the mind, the fond wish one dare not avow but over which one gloated inwardly, was a wraith, a ghost. Thorburn's buried wish was haunting him. The stork at his side was its ghost.

Not a word of all this escaped me; no hint of the presence of the grave bird passed my lips. I laid my case before him to the extent of avowing my fear of some infection. He examined me from head to foot. He made every laboratory test possible in the circumstances. As he came and went, now peering into my eyes, again holding a tube aloft in the bright electric light of his laboratory, I saw the stork follow him, sit at his feet, flap noiseless wings or prepare for some wild flight that was never even attempted.

"There is no organic disorder," was Thorburn's report at last. "I see no evidence yet of the presence of any infection. I can let you know definitely in a week."

The stork, invisible to Thorburn, eyed me gravely as I took my leave. In much perplexity I walked slowly to my home, letting myself in with my own key and

repairing to my study with a profound problem on my mind. The first thing was to find Philander. He had a trick of fashioning a nest for himself out of old newspapers under a corner of my desk. I called him by name. There was no response. At first I suspected him of hiding from me by design, a thing he was very prone to when he feared being shut up in his cage for the night. He had a great affection for the chimney. The soot in that retreat begrimed his coat most sadly, although he never failed to wash himself clean the moment he emerged. There had been no fire in my study since the spring. I thrust my head into the empty grate and called his name loudly. There was again no response.

I was not in any great alarm. He had a way of disappearing now and then, sometimes for as long as twenty-four hours. My one dread was that a stray cat or dog might pounce upon my pet. There was now nothing for it but to compose myself in my easy chair and ponder the events of this day.

My eye wandered vacantly over the papers and test tubes forming a litter in front of me until a gleam of something like light, a flash like the twinkle of a distant star, enchained my glance. The shimmer and flash were a series of stains upon a handkerchief. I picked up the silken article in some bewilderment at first. It looked like some fantastic flag with suns in gold designed upon its center. My own initials worked in a corner of the piece of silk brought back to my recollection a slight bleeding of the nose which had troubled me that morning. I had applied this silk handkerchief to my face. The slight hemorrhage ceased. I had given the matter no further thought. Now I saw spots of shining gold where in the morning my blood had stained this piece of silk a bright red.

In my bewilderment I took the handkerchief over to the window. There could be no doubt now of the brightness of the gold. Never in my experience had I heard of man or woman who bled gold. I resolved to despatch the handkerchief to Thorburn for an immediate

analysis. The ringing of the bell, a voice at the door and the entrance of a visitor postponed the execution of this purpose.

"And how is our rising young psycho-analyst?" cried a cheery voice, as a burly form broke rather than appeared through the door. "Upon my word, that last talk of yours upon the mental mechanism of the banished idea has made you famous."

My visitor carried with him, I saw now, a late number of the official organ of a psychological society. One of my studies was given a very prominent place in the periodical. I glanced at the printed page and then rose to greet old Graham. I dearly loved this man, for he had been one of my most honored preceptors in my student days.

"My dear Graham!" I cried.

A silvery dove fluttered about his head, but I was accustomed by this time to my capacity for this species of visualization and I betrayed by neither word nor glance the effect of the sight upon me. The dove, I could see, corresponded to the system of ideas making up the "complex" of this good and generous man. What a contrast to the predatory old Pawkins, whose repressed ideas emerged in spite of himself under the guise of a wolf—at least to my vision! It has been well said that in the psychical sphere complexes have an action resembling that of energy in the physical sphere. A system of ideas may lie latent in a man's mind for a long time, becoming active only when stimulated. This explained, no doubt, why the dove hovering over old Doctor Graham flitted out of sight now and then.

"My boy," said the old man, looking somewhat anxiously about him before he sank into the chair I brought, "are we alone?"

I nodded. There was an anxiety on his mind which became more manifest as he proceeded:

"You may have heard that one or two well defined cases of plague came recently to the notice of the board."

I recalled such a report. I had first heard of the matter at a gathering of physicians some time before. Graham,

who was in the service of the Board of Health, had taken the matter seriously at the time, but the affair had dropped out of my thoughts long since. The old man leaned forward to impress me with what he had now to say:

"The cases have been increasing. We have made up our minds to make war on the rats."

"The rats!"

I spoke in a tone of some consternation. The words brought the missing Philander back to my memory.

"The rats," repeated Graham solemnly. "We have actually discovered the bacillus in the bodies of no less than three rats."

"Were they rats caught in the city?"

"In this very neighborhood. We have been quietly trapping here and there. We don't want to start a plague panic until we are sure of our facts."

I watched the dove flitting still above his head and I thought of Philander. Had they trapped the golden rat? I had to steady my voice with an effort before I could put my question:

"These rats—they are the ordinary gray variety?"

The elderly physician looked troubled.

"Yes—and no," said he slowly. "Our traps have contained gray rats as a rule. But in two instances we have captured a very peculiar variety of the animal—gray rats with a spot of gold on the breast."

He drew from his pocket as he spoke a small leather casket. It opened at the touch of a spring. I saw the stuffed skin of a gray rat, splashed in the spot indicated with gleaming gold.

"This rat," explained old Graham, lifting the stuffed object up for my inspection, "was trapped in the house next door. It is one of six marked in this very extraordinary manner—a species never seen before by any authority I have consulted."

III

I took the stuffed rat from the grasp of my elderly friend and examined its aspect critically. Those who have never

studied at first hand the habits of a rodent of such sinister fame can form no idea of the natural cleanliness of the little animal. Apart from the tendency of the flea to infest the rat, it is one of the daintiest of quadrupeds, not, indeed, without a beauty of its own. The spot of gold between the forepaws of this specimen set off its gray coat effectively.

"Although we have trapped rats all over the city," proceeded old Graham earnestly, "they are all of the usual gray type except those few caught next door. I have just been setting traps in your cellar."

The thought of Philander made my blood run cold at these words. I gazed in blank dismay at the physician. What had become of the golden rat?

"Have you"—I faltered before I could speak the question completely—"caught anything here?"

"My dear lad, the traps have just been set—two of them. I can let you know the result in a few days."

"You spoke just now," I resumed, in as natural a voice as I could command, "of having isolated the bacillus in the blood of some of your rats. How about these?"

Graham took the stuffed rat from me and looked it over.

"We have isolated a most curious organism in the blood stream of this little creature," he observed. "A golden microbe."

"What disease does it cause?"

I tried again to speak naturally, but I remembered the golden blood I had shed and felt faint. What if I had acquired a new and strange leprosy from the bite of the golden fleas of Philander!

"Strange as it must seem," I now heard Graham aver, "the microbe—it is really a bacillus with its nucleus and protoplasm—gives rise to no discoverable disease in the rat infected by it. Perhaps it is responsible for the gold spot."

He touched the flaming breast of the stuffed creature.

"The remarkable thing," the old doctor added, "is the golden element in the rodlike process of these organisms. One might almost say the blood of this rat was golden."

My mind reverted to the analysis of my own blood cells which Thorburn was at that moment engaged upon.

"You don't mean to say," I rejoined, smiling, "that you have discovered a form of bacteria that is beneficial to the invaded organism?"

"I'll know more about that when I have trapped more of these rats," the old man told me. "I expect to get some here by the end of the week."

The moment he had taken his leave, which he did almost immediately, the dove fluttering out with him, I rang up Thorburn.

"Come over at once, if you can," he said at the other end of the wire. "I have news for you."

I put on my hat and paced the streets hurriedly. I caught sight of a policeman at the corner taking a prisoner to the lockup. The man in the toils of the law was obviously a beggar. At his heels trotted a snow white lamb. The policeman was followed by a hawk. I turned and gazed after the pair until both had disappeared around a corner. Was I doomed to see at the heels of every fellow creature the symbol of his suppressed idea, the ghost of his complex? I fairly raced to Thorburn's door.

"There is something very remarkable here," was his first utterance, as he led the way to his laboratory. "What do you make of that?"

He held up a glass slide of the sort used in experimental biology. It was stained with a golden spot.

"Your blood," said he. "It has yielded a pure gold bacterium of the strangest character. Your blood is like the stream in which King Midas bathed—filled with golden sands."

He had scarcely said the words when a movement of flapping wings behind him drew my eyes to the stork. It stood for a moment erect and then retreated to the remotest corner of the laboratory, where it regarded both of us with all its characteristic solemnity. Thorburn was unaware of the ghostly presence. He sat me down in a great chair and questioned me most minutely regarding my symptoms.

"You must have contracted a disease of some sort," was his final verdict.

"Fatal?"

"I am using the word in a technical sense," he laughed, seeing my sober visage. "Disease is, in one aspect, the invasion of one organism by another. Your organism has been invaded by a new and strange bacterium, all gold. You say it does not debilitate you?"

"I never felt better in my life."

I glanced unshrinkingly into his puzzled face. I had carefully concealed from him the fact that I had acquired the novel faculty of beholding the repressed complexes of my fellow creatures.

"Your disease," he went on, "whatever it may be, is the effect of the interaction of two different organisms, just as plague is such an effect, or malaria."

"A new idea."

"Not at all," retorted Thorburn. "It is not generally disseminated, of course, yet. Since disease is but the effect of one organism upon another, there is necessarily such a thing as an evolution in disease. A disease that has long been among men is a very different thing from the same disease when it first appeared on earth. The lizard is but the survivor of a far more powerful and far more intelligent creature."

I had caught the idea in his mind. The sudden appearance of a new organism is a possible thing, as the mutation theory of evolution has convinced the world. May not a totally new disease make its appearance among men, thanks to the emergence of a fresh form among the bacteria? Has not Burbank evolved new forms of vegetable life by a seeming miracle of metamorphosis? But this was by no means all that Thorburn meant. May it not be that the bacteria which cause disease are prejudicial only because they represent types of degeneracy? They have been corrupted, that is to say, by passing in and out of the blood streams of a fallen human race. It is we who have poisoned the bacteria, not the bacteria which have poisoned us. In that event, science is on the wrong track. We must purify ourselves, in order that the microbe may regain its pristine purity and become the blessing

it may have been to our prehistoric ancestors.

I remained in a profound reverie long after Thorburn had finished his elucidation. If what he told me was true, I had acquired an infection, but it was a benevolent process, a source of strength. The flea had transferred to me from the body of Philander an organism that endowed me with a more wonderful power than had been possessed before by any mortal man.

"By the way," remarked Thorburn, suddenly changing the subject, "shall you be at Miss Lancaster's dance tomorrow night?"

I started at mention of that name. It had been weeks since I had given a thought to my patient. I replied vaguely that I expected to dine at her house. My mind was running on Philander once more, and I bade him adieu with some abruptness.

There was not the least trace of the presence of the golden rat when I arrived breathless once more in my study. I called him by name more than once. In vain. I thought of the trap set by old Graham. Before visiting the cellars I resolved to peer up the fireplace.

"Philander!" I called. "Philander!" There was a faint sound up the chimney. In a trice I had thrust my arm up the sooty embrasure. Philander descended, clinging to the sleeve of my coat. What a begrimed and blackened aspect his coat now wore! I set him upon my desk, where he fell to an assiduous licking and washing of his fur. I had the satisfaction of seeing him restored to his original color before he had completed his toilet. Then he frisked his way to my shoulder, upon which he perched with all his familiar sauciness.

It was vitally important to keep Philander out of reach of the trap set for him. I might have ordered the stableman to remove the horrid instrument, to be sure. Yet that might inspire too much wonder in the mind of old Graham. On the other hand, I must not let the golden rat out of my sight. He spent the night securely locked in his cage. He was not released during the entire next day. His squeaks of protest were in-

cessant. I would have no mercy on him.

After some reflection, I resolved to attend the dinner and dance at the house of Miss Lancaster. It seemed the surest method of providing for the safety of Philander. It would be no difficult thing to take him with me, concealed in the pocket of my coat. The golden rat was always shy when strangers were about. I knew that nothing could lure him from the refuge my clothes afforded him if there seemed the least prospect that he might be handled by an unfamiliar acquaintance.

IV

THE hour appointed for the dinner at the house of Miss Lancaster was already chiming when I entered the dining room. The guests were barely a dozen. I was already familiar with their faces. Philander was snugly ensconced in a breast pocket of my dress coat. He was fast asleep.

"What a stranger you are, Doctor!"

The words were uttered by my fair hostess. I had never seen a more pensive melancholy upon her exquisite features. She sat at some distance from me at the foot of the table. I made my very best bow and smiled before I sat down to the oysters.

"Ha!" exclaimed Thorburn, who chanced to be seated directly opposite me. "You are looking very well—still."

There was a meaning smile upon his kindly features, and I was at no loss to interpret it. The silent stork at his side peered myopically into my face and flapped a pair of wings. I saw the hideous wolf peering greedily from beneath the chair of old Pawkins, who absorbed champagne moodily. Miss Lancaster's father had a fierce ferret on his shoulder, a circumstance to which I was inclined to attribute the restlessness of Philander, who stirred now and then in his sleep. The most interesting object at the dinner table to me was a hyena, which chafed and fretted at the back of a distinguished member of the judiciary.

One old lady, whom I had met before, and who was a notorious gambler, revealed to my secret vision as her repressed complex a gigantic pike. The fish literally swam in the air over the dame's head, darting every now and then ferociously at prey invisible to me.

"I hear," observed Pawkins at last, "that there is a case of plague in quarantine."

The wolf leered over his shoulder and licked its hideous jaw. The introduction of so dire a theme at that crisis in my life spoiled the dinner for me. I listened to the flow of talk about me, hearing much speculation regarding such things as fleas and the bacilli. Miss Lancaster seemed only half aware of what was transpiring around her. My attention was drawn particularly to her by the suggestion of a wraith upon her shoulder. I had looked eagerly in her direction more than once, hoping to descry the symbolized embodiment of her complex. That there was a form of some description outlined upon her shoulder seemed clear. I thought at first it might be a bird. Later it wore the aspect of a fish. At last, I had to abandon the effort to define to myself the shadowy thing moving from her right arm around her shoulders to her left. The secret of my patient's repressed complex was almost mine. Again and again it eluded me. The vexation of that circumstance made the end of the dinner a welcome relief. I strolled into the smoking room, listening vaguely to the din of the violins, tuning for the dance.

Finding myself alone, I peered into my pocket. Philander was fast asleep. I hated to disturb the repose of the golden creature, and for that reason remained with my cigar alone to the last possible minute. In the end I was obliged to make my appearance in the ballroom.

There was not a dancer on the whole vast floor without his or her attendant creature. A member of the United States Senate was closely followed in the mazes of a waltz by an opossum, while his partner, a lady with some fame as a landscape painter, kept a porcupine in

her train. The pastor of a church led a vampire in its flight among the dancers, above whom it poised itself, fanning sundry individuals with its wings. There was one gigantic crocodile in a corner which every now and then abandoned the shelter of the wall to cavort and caper after the founder of fifteen hospitals. In short, wherever I looked I beheld specimens of a zoology unsuspected by those who danced in and about among pelicans, pumas, guinea pigs and polar bears. One gigantic creature, symbolizing the repressed complex of the most famous lawyer in the country, was evidently an antediluvian monster. It appeared to my astonished gaze somewhat like a lepidosiren. These creatures were like the men and women they all haunted in turning, twisting and waltzing to the music. Now and then there were collisions of a significant sort. I beheld a fierce fight between two bantam roosters, one being the repressed complex of a well known novelist and the other that of a successful merchant. The repressed complex of the merchant's wife—a lily white hen—watched the struggle complacently. When the bird symbolizing her husband was routed from the field, I saw the lady begin a fresh dance with the novelist.

It occurred to me to seek my hostess. She had not appeared on the floor for some time. I felt an uneasy movement in the pocket of my coat. For the sake of Philander rather than to secure any repose for myself, I sought the shelter of the Japanese room. I was quite alone when I sank back wearily upon a sofa and looked at my watch. It would soon be time to go.

I was opening my cigarette case when

Miss Lancaster appeared in the doorway. Her exquisite features wore an unusual gravity, even for her, as she advanced. I divined that she had a revelation to make. Whatever I might have said remained unspoken, however, in the shock of discovering a golden rat perched upon her shoulder. For a moment the idea entered my head that Philander must have escaped from my pocket. I perceived, as soon as I had looked at the creature again, that I could not implicate Philander. The golden rat on the shoulder of Miss Lancaster was smaller than my pet. It was of less robust physique, softer in outline, more graceful.

I had placed my hand in Miss Lancaster's outstretched fingers when a flashing form sprang from the pocket of my coat. There was a tiny shriek of joy. I saw Philander capering and shrieking on the floor with the diminutive creature that followed him from the shoulders of the lady who had so long been my most baffling patient.

"I think," I managed to say, my eyes riveted upon the gambolling creatures on the floor—"I think I have the key to your case."

I saw a flush spread from her cheek to her brow. She bowed her head and, still holding my hand, sank upon the chair from which I had just risen. It seems odd to me, as I look back upon all this, that I never suspected the mutual infatuation out of which our repressed complexes were built up. She loved me. I saw the avowal in the eyes she turned up to my face as I bent over her. As our lips met, I felt a convulsive shudder at my breast. I put my hand in my pocket. There lay Philander, cold and dead.



THE supreme remark of altruism: "Here's her 'phone number."



TO test your bride's love: Go on your honeymoon wearing detachable cuffs.

WHEN THE GREAT TRAP SPRANG

By Paul Choiseul

IT was December, and winter had come as far south even as the cotton country of east Texas, so that the horses drawing the three wagons walked along briskly, the breath from their nostrils blowing white in the wet, freezing air. Leaving behind the trapper's isolated farm set in the rim of still cypress trees circling Caddo Lake the gray road mounted gradually through the oaks of slightly higher ground, then became a lane through the towering pines of the sand hill section. After four miles there was an occasional farm, its gaunt fields covered with wind-twisted, tottering, pallid yellow cornstalks and the black skeletons of cotton bushes. After six miles the road came to Mount Zion Chapel.

No fence guarded the tiny weather-stained church and the little burying ground behind it, and the wagons moved toward a mound of freshly dug earth under the trees. One of the several negroes standing about the grave, on seeing the wagons, had run into the church; and now, partly out of respect for old Joe Lucky, partly out of a love of ceremony, began tolling the small bell that hung in an open framework on the front end of the roof ridge. Scarcely were the sounds born of the bell before their lives were sucked out by the giant pines. The listeners heard them dying amidst the thickly crowding woods, without echo.

The trapper was the only white person in the party, and also since he had been the dead negro's landlord, he felt that he was being looked to for instructions. It was a kind of responsibility that weighed heavily on the young man; besides, old Lucky had been his volun-

teer hunting and fishing companion and loyal servitor; so that emotion and nervousness threatened the calm, dignified demeanor he instinctively felt was demanded of the white man among a company of negroes.

Taking a stand against a tree at the head of the grave, he lifted off his broad-brimmed, black hat and held it stiffly down against his leg. That occupied one huge hand; with the other he kept stroking at his tremendous red beard, the ferocity of which contrasted almost comically with the boyish simplicity showing in and about his round, wide-open, brown eyes, misting now with tears in spite of his indignation at his weakness. But his beard only partly occupied his left hand; now and then he leaned down to tuck his gray jean trousers into the tops of his leather boots.

"All right, Mister Richard?" called one of the negroes across the grave. He raised the hat in assent, nodding his head gravely. At the slight, unavoidable scuffling noise of lowering the coffin into the ground, Jessica, Lucky's daughter, who had been standing outside the circle around the grave, pushed her way through it and stood straining her eyes down into the hole as if to see all that lay below it, patting at her mouth, not yet yielding to tears.

Some of the negro women the trapper had hurried down from the farming country to attend to the body had managed, overnight, to get together for her a long dress of striped, brown material, in place of the short skirt such as she had been wearing. Looking at her, the trapper found that he was trying to identify something different about her

that had not hitherto risen above the threshold of his consciousness. He wondered if she could have attained a remarkable growth without his having seen it in the three years she had been on the lake farm. His eyes calculated that her head would just about reach his shoulder. Her height, the cream-colored cheeks tipped with pink, the black eyes, the black hair, parted in the middle and combed back straight over her round head, revealing the negro in her by means of its crinkly fluffiness—all these details, though he had never before definitely noticed them, did not disturb in the least the familiar subconscious picture he had of her. And yet there was a new element in her that was disturbing the old picture.

Presently spades were smoothing the mounded earth over Joe Lucky, and Jessica threw herself on it, whimpering in little gasping gulps, pounding in vain appeal at the unresponsive clods. Now the trapper saw, though he could not say it clearly even to himself, that Jessica was a woman.

When he had got in his wagon to drive back home, without hesitation she crawled in behind him. It seemed cruel that she should sit on the hard floor of the wagon bed, but the subtle sense of caste that had always caused Lucky to fall in behind him even in the woods now killed the impulse to insist on her riding on the single spring seat by his side.

On the way back to Caddo Lake, Herron speculated vaguely as to why he had not noticed before that Jessica had become a woman. Recollecting scraps of information dropped by her father, he estimated—old Lucky himself had never done more—that she was between sixteen and seventeen. She spoke with an infantile lisp; she was, as compared with him, small, and childishly plump and soft; and he had simply not thought much about her, accepting her as part of his luckily comfortable environment.

At home, Jessica slipped over the tail-board of the wagon and hurried to the log house at the back of the yard. The new element the trapper had discovered in her, with its swarm of inevitable as-

sociations, filled his mind with dim solicitous thoughts about her welfare. He started out early on his round to bait the traps, so that he might get back in time to cook supper himself. His attention was so little given to possible coons and mink and otter that he came near committing the woodsman's solecism of leaving the jaws of a trap unset after he had baited its tongue, and was astounded at himself. The December day was short; there had been no sun, and when he again reached the clearing around his two-room log house his kitchen window was a warm, inviting yellow square of light against the cold black night outside; and he knew that Jessica, as usual, was cooking his supper.

Hastening through his main room, he stopped at the doorway letting into the combined dining room and kitchen.

"Why, Jess, I didn't aim for you to—"

"Oh, I'm all wight, Mister Wichard," she interrupted him, turning quickly to the stove as if to watch something in danger there. "I'd as lief work as set around a-mopin'; I'd wuther do it."

After supper he sat down before the open fire in his main room with his pipe. As she ate he thought he heard her stifle a sob now and then. Soon the wind began blowing savagely out of the north, slashing sawing seas of rain across the roof and the mud-chinked walls. He heard the moist clicking of the crockery in the dishpan, then their dry clicking under the towel; and he knew that presently Jessica would be through with her duties in his house. He wondered if it would be more decent to permit her to run through the deluge to the other house or to compel her to sleep in the kitchen by the cooking stove. She appeared at the door while he was still debating the question.

"Good night, Mister Wichard."

"Take my slicker off the nail in the wall there by you, Jess. You'll get soaked in a minute if you don't. It's rainin' bobcats outside."

"Ne' min', Mister Wichard; you'll need it when you make yo' wounds of the twaps in the mawnin'."

"The rain will be over by that time, I

reckon. You take that slicker, anyhow, Jess."

"All wight, sir." And saying nothing more, she obeyed him, and went out of the back door.

After a while, having pulled forward the firedogs and set them so that the burning logs could not roll out across the hearth onto the floor, he got in bed, sighing luxuriously. The drumming of the rain on the clapboard roof, undimmed by the intervention of any ceiling, was wont to call him quickly off to sleep; but now he lay a long time staring out at the red shadows dancing before the fireplace, considering the case of Jessica, and, incidentally, of himself.

He had come, five years before, at the age of eighteen, from Minden, thirty miles up the country, on the bank of Big Cypress Bayou. While yet in school he had begun making excursions down the bayou, going further and staying longer each time. His companions, soon growing out of the hunting and fishing stage, had given themselves to the uninterrupted cultivation of civilization in the small town, including respectable business, matrimony and children. Old Dick, as they called him in mingled affection and contempt, had finally given himself to the uninterrupted cultivation of the woods and water.

Having established himself on the nearest approximate of a hill around the lake, by the side of an all-year spring, he had bought, for a few dollars, twenty acres of land for the protection of his camp site. Then the nomadic Joe Lucky, from up in the cotton country, had wanted to rent the land that he might combine the laborious vocation of farming with the delightful avocation of fishing and hunting; so the trapper had invested in a wagon and team, and the two men had cleared the land and built the second log house. For three years the old negro and his daughter had been the loyal servitors of the tall young man with the ferocious red beard, who did not care, nor seemed to need to care, for anything more than three meals a day and plenty of shotgun shells.

What to do about Jessica now? He lay listening to the raindrops and thinking about that. She ought not to continue living out in that other house; she ought not to continue living on his farm at all. Stars above, but he would miss her—miss her services, miss her fascinating silent smile, the cheerfulness of her, the prettiness of her, her grave little mothering ways that had always made him laugh. Somehow, he wished that he had not laughed at her so much. Yes, he would miss her; still—the trapper went to sleep with the thunder in his ears.

Before he had risen the next morning he heard Jessica in the kitchen cooking his breakfast; it came to him instantly that she had gotten up even earlier than usual to bring his slicker back before he should need it. Herron let that day slip by without saying anything about her going away, and the next, and then a week. The words with which to tell her simply would not rise for him. The machinery of the old life, less one wheel, moved on steadily, carrying them both with it. She gave as much time as ever to the two houses, to the cooking, the chickens and the cow; she gave more time to him; she had it to give. On one of his rare trips to town he bought some gray woolen goods, according to explicit directions and a large sample. He thought it was to be a dress for her, but coming in late from the traps one night, he found it lying on his bed all made up into four shirts for himself.

With the approach of January, under the stimulation exercised in advance, and chiefly in advance, by all young years, the trapper set himself the hard task of speaking without hurting. And one night early in the first month of the new year, having had supper, he still sat at the table. Jessica stopped her work about the stove to look at him.

"Ain't you goin' in to smoke, Mister Wichard?"

"Yes, directly."

Picking up a fork, he began pricking holes in the red and blue oilcloth table cover, painfully following one of the intricately interwoven hexagonal pat-

terns. The fork was taken gently out of his hand.

"Mister Wichard!" Jessica stood gazing at him, horrified.

"Jess, daggone it, I've got to talk to you." He flung his huge bulk around in the creaking chair. "How old are you, anyhow, Jess?"

"Pap sayed I was about sixteen, goin' on seventeen."

"You've got some kinfolks up in the country above Mount Zion, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir; I have an aunt up there on a fahm." She moved back a step from him. Her hand fluttered nervously about her throat and breast. "How come you to ask, Mister Wichard?"

"Well, you see, Jess—well, you ought to be with your kinfolks now."

"Do you want me to go up there, Mister Wichard? Away f'om heah?"

"Well, Jess—well, anyhow, you better get ready in the mawnin', and I'll move you up there in the afternoon. Stars above, but I reckon they'll be glad to take you in, mighty glad if they've got any sense."

Getting to his feet, he drummed his fingers on the table, bent down to peer out through the window at the night, mumbled, "We may get snow yet," and walked into the adjoining room. Behind him—he did not dare look back—he heard Jessica saying: "All wight, Mister Wichard; I'll be weady." Passing out through his front door, he went down to the boat landing and sat listening to the waves slapping coldly against his skiff, waiting until Jessica had eaten and finished her work and gone to the other house. He knew she was crying.

The end of February found no work done toward another season's crops. Under the stimulation of the new year, Herron had also planned to carry on the farm labor laid down by Lucky. Besides, the trapping season was over until another winter should begin. In January the rail fence should have been repaired, and some ground should have been broken. Already the spring sun, swinging northward, had come into the cotton country, and here and there in

the woods the soft-cheeked, black-eyed dogwood blossoms held up their little round faces to him. Herron spent what leisure was left from cooking and household drudgery drifting through the forest with a gun. He rarely used it; it was an explanation to himself of why he wanted to be there instead of out on the lake where there was good commercial fishing.

Occasionally he rowed up through the lake and the bayou to Minden—for supplies, he told himself as well as his father and sister. But now he brought nothing to sell, and stayed longer and longer on each trip; so that they began to suspect, joyfully, that at last he was growing out of the barbarous stage, as his boyhood companions had done long since. His sister believed that he would soon take his place in the respectable society of the little bayou town; his father was glad to think that presently he would accept the clerkship in his hardware store that was always open to him.

But though he remained much more than usual in Minden, the trapper did not seem to be enjoying his visits. Sometimes he dawdled up and down the four or five dingy streets constituting the "business section," stopping now to talk languidly with the group of county officers and hangers-on sitting on the shady side of the courthouse, now lounging in a billiard hall staring absent-mindedly at the lazy game. He piddled around in the back yard at his father's house, making chicken coops, repairing the dog kennel, readily doing any odd job suggested by his beloved sister. Sometimes he found himself sitting on the bayou's small wharf merely looking down at the water flowing by. But most of the time he walked a mile or two into the woods crowding close up about the town and lay on the ground, gazing up at the softly streaming clouds, running his fingers through the grass, dimly conscious of a strange, exquisite thrill.

By the end of April the trapper had decided to go into his father's store. It was not that he liked Minden a great deal; he had come to loathe Caddo Lake;

and he could not think of staying at home without doing something. He knew of nothing else he could do. He had spent a day or so in the store, which had a good trade in guns and ammunition and fishing tackle; his time there had not been unpleasant. It was not his nature to be volubly communicative; so, on starting back for the lake, he told his sister that he might return to town right away.

"For good this time, buddie?" she asked in appeal.

"I don't know, sis; maybe." He smiled promisingly, and she hugged him tight.

In other days, rowing across the lake, the sight of his weather-browned log house on the little hill among the trees had always filled him with a delightful glow of anticipated quiet and comfort, with the proud feeling of proprietorship, with a large loving emotion in greeting of the home that seemed to connect him so closely with the water and the woods and the tremendous, half-mysterious, vastly stirring life in them. Now, when he turned in his seat to see how to steer the boat, he did not raise his eyes above the landing on the reed-grown shore.

Tying the boat, and loading his arms with three or four days' supplies, he walked slackly up the path leading to the house. One of Jessica's hens, grown wild on the deserted place, fluttered off among the bushes, calling after her a brood of new-hatched chickens. At the house, the vines Jessica had planted around the front porch were in flower; somehow, they made everything near them appear more poignantly lonesome. The scarecrow Jessica had set up out at the side of the house to frighten hawks away from her chickens had fallen down. Jessica's two forlorn little rose bushes on either side of the path were smothering to death under the weeds.

The next morning he set out early to catch the two horses; he wanted to get back to town, away from that place, as soon as he could; he thought perhaps he could begin moving away that night. The furniture was to be taken to town, the wagon and team to be sold. The horses were as wild as the chickens; it

required most of the morning to capture them. Having partly loaded the wagon, he cooked his midday meal, and then went over to the spring, fifty feet away, to smoke and rest for a while.

The trapper had always cherished something like affection for his spring; he had found it, had let it decide the establishment of his homesite, had been happy in boasting of its drinking qualities and its perennial flow. Now he sat on the sloping, grass-covered ground, watching impatiently how the stream from it twisted and turned and detoured on its way down to the lake, a hundred yards below. Catching himself almost finding a fault in it, he hurried to think, defensively, that it was doing the best it could; it had to get down to the lake, and if tree roots and rocks were in its course it must work around them somehow.

The pipe dead in his mouth, his legs weary from the chase of the untamed horses, his ears lulled by the tiny gurgling of the spring branch, he lay back on the grass and slipped away to sleep.

He woke up lying on his side. Jessica was sitting a few feet away from him, her arms clasped around her knees, gazing into the distance across the lake. His consciousness was pleased to link itself with memories five months old, rather than with the immediate past; so that he was not surprised to see her, and did not move or speak. Presently, looking around, she smiled into his open eyes that old silent smile of hers.

"I went wight on in the kitchen to get somfin to eat, Mister Wichard," she said. "I was mighty hungry. I walked all the way down, an' it's eight miles, you know. Land sakes, Mister Wichard, has anybody cleaned up the house since I been gone away?"

Recollecting the present circumstances, the trapper sat up quickly.

"They treat you all right up there, don't they, Jess?" he asked fiercely.

"Oh, yes, sir; they sayed they were glad to have me." After a while she asked: "Have you been well, Mister Wichard?"

"Yes. Have you?"

"Oh, me? Yes, sir; I ain't never sick."

"What do you do up there, Jess?"

"I cook, an' wash, an' sew, an' all spring I been ploughing a whole lot. See, Mister Wichard, my hands are wight smart blistered."

She crawled over to him, smiling triumphantly at her blisters, spreading her palms under his eyes for him to see. He touched them as if to gratify her by a complete verification.

"Yes, you have, Jess."

"My feet are all weared out," she went on. "The sand in the woad was so hot." Taking off her shoes, she lay back on the grass, crooking her left arm over her eyes and reaching out with her right hand to stroke the grass back and forth tenderly. Unconsciously the young man began doing the same thing.

"I heard 'at you was gone away to town for good an' all," she continued after a long silence. "People sayed you had forsooken the old place. So I came down to see it one more time. I was homesick, Mister Wichard. Oh, I was so homesick!"

Her voice caught in a queer, tangled,

tiny sound that was partly laughing, mostly sobbing; and under the shadow of her arm a film of moisture shone over her black eyes.

"Were you, Jess? I reckon that's what was the matter with me."

Their hands, feeling back and forth across the thrilling grass, touched, and held.

Out beyond the rim of forest the lake lay a vast sheet of pulsing silver under the April sun. Down among the cypress trees faint whispers moved among the soft branches. Behind them, near the house, the great pines sighed up at the bending sky. All about them, from trees and grass and flowers, there flamed the passionate perfume of the straining, ecstatic season. Out under the bushes a hen called querulous commands to her struggling brood of helpless chicks. The spring branch went inevitably on down its appointed way.

Late in the afternoon Jessica was in the kitchen singing one of those wild, wordless, sad songs that negroes sing when they are content and happy. Herron was moving some furniture from the wagon back into the house. The great trap had sprung.



BROADWAY

By Sara Teasdale

THIS is the quiet hour. The theaters
 Have gathered in their crowds, and steadily
 The million lights blaze on for few to see,
 Robbing the sky of stars that should be hers.
 A woman waits with bag and shabby furs;
 A somber man drifts by, and only we
 Pass up the street unwearied, warm and free,
 For in our hearts the olden magic stirs.
 Beneath the liquid splendor of the lights
 We live a little ere the charm is spent;
 This night is ours of all the golden nights,
 The pavement an enchanted palace floor,
 And Youth the player on the viol who sent
 A strain of music through an open door.

LA REVANCHE

By Harrison Reeves

WHEN I got to Lavenue's for coffee the other night—Christmas Eve, to be exact—after my dinner, I found my place taken by a German and his wife. So I sat in the corner next the man. Since the orchestra hadn't tuned up yet I got *Le Temps* out of my overcoat pocket and read the regular diplomatic editorial on the London peace conference. Before I could turn the paper over to the financial columns, the German asked me in French if he might borrow it, the café's copy being in use. I hadn't finished, but I let him have it just to save conversation.

A soldier came in, chose my corner, and asked the German if the chair opposite his bench seat was taken. The German was absorbed in the paper and didn't hear. His wife heard but didn't understand. So the soldier asked me if he might sit at the German's table. I said I didn't mind. He thanked me, sat down, and ordered a *café-crème*.

The German next attracted my attention by a series of guffaws, indicative evidently of anger at something in the newspaper. "Ridiculous! Preposterous! Gets worse and worse!" were among the remarks which he barked, in German, out through the left side of his mustache at his wife, who sipped her beer just the same. Then he translated into German for her benefit part of a news despatch from Strasbourg about some sort of campaign being waged against an abbé named Wetterlé for having come to Paris to deliver lectures about the German administration of Alsace-Lorraine. At the conclusion of a couple of paragraphs the German got so angry that he crumpled my paper

all up in his fists, smacked it into a puddle of beer out beyond his stomach, jiggled the soldier's glass so that the waiter stopped pouring coffee into it to look up, and growled, again into his wife's right ear: "The blasted fools! These fool Frenchmen and their dolt priests! Ach! They make me vomit!"

When the soldier took the spoon off the saucer to stir his coffee he saw the price mark of fifty centimes on the saucer. The waiter noticed his attention to the mark and lingered. "Ten sous?" the soldier inquired of him, sharply. "Fancy place, huh?"

The waiter didn't know what to say and judged the soldier too spunky for a joking answer. The latter mumbled, more to himself than to the waiter: "A sign outside would do the business. Then we'd not get taken in."

"Now there's a piece of it for you, right there," observed the German to his wife, in German, as before. "A regular sample! This tightwad Government pays its soldiers a sou a day, and when one of them hits Paris and wanders into a high-toned café by mistake, he has to make a damn fool of himself before a waiter and a roomful of foreigners by kicking on the price of a *café-crème*. And the man in uniform at that—a miserable, dirty rag bundle that he has chucked on his back by this old-woman Government! Look at that cap! Just look at the cap on that fellow! I wouldn't shine my boots with it—Ach!"

Now that little soldier fellow—he wasn't a day over twenty—got right up out of his chair at that speech, crushed his flannel infantryman's shako in his fist and vibrated it vividly up and

down exactly under the great red nose of the German. He was so mad he couldn't make sounds, not even mutters. His eyes jumped and his cropped head sprouted. The German's face was as set as a trap. The wife looked as if she were going to spit. People at other tables took notice. I watched the soldier boy's teeth.

Some few inarticulate German syllables filtered through, but the tongue in behind couldn't manage them. He fairly yelled in French—thick, beery, cheesy French, the French of Alsace-Lorraine, more unmistakable than the accent of a Chinaman:

"This cap, huh? This cap! It is dirty, is it? Yes, it is! I know — well it's dirty. I know how dirty it is! I wear the — — thing, I do! I wear it on my head, by — ! It ain't my cap, — — it, it ain't mine! I didn't make it! I didn't pick it in a shop! That cap, that cap—it's the Government's cap, by — ! D'ye think I like to tote the thing? D'ye think I like the stink o' the greasy pot on my head, next to my hide, by — ! By — — ! Can't you get it through your nut that I wear that cap and this here jacket and these pants and these damn clodhopper shoes and tote a gun all day long in the rain and walk my damn fool head off and eat garbage and sleep on a manure heap and never have any fun and work like hell just because I'm ordered to do it, by — , by the Government of this here country? D'ye s'pose I like it? Not a — — bit! And d'ye s'pose I'd be doin' it, or any o' us 'd be doin' it, if it weren't for you, the *Germans*, by — — , with your fancy, foxy, crackerjack army all lined up in brass helmets and high leather boots over on the frontier east there? I've seen the — — — — — — — ! I know how they look! Jeeeeesus-Chriiiist! You make me good and — mad, do you know it?"

The German evidently found the silence of the café harder to face than the ravings of the soldier boy, by this time all disheveled and hysterical in his expression. I observed that the patron, standing over behind the or-

chestra, was as white as his shirt front. Some relief was afforded by the whisperings of young women foreigners who were asking their chaperons to translate what the soldier had been saying. It was clear that the German's wife hadn't got a word of it, though she was defiant at the situation in general, so far as she could guess it.

The German continued to stare the soldier boy square in the eye, his face showing no lack of composure. When he decided that his opponent had had time enough to cool a little and to begin to be ashamed of himself, the German swallowed a gulp of beer, wiped his mustaches, drew up his shoulders off his stomach, snapped his jaws a couple of times, and began calmly, in a firm, authoritative tone. His French was less Alsatian than the soldier's.

"Listen to me! Pay attention, now! Where is your regiment—the—hundred and sixty-ninth infantry?"

"At Rouen."

"What are you doing in Paris tonight?"

"I'm just discharged from two weeks' hospital, for rheumatism, caught last maneuvers. I got out this afternoon. I'm staying over for *réveillon*."

The boy got his book out of his hip pocket and passed the hospital's discharge papers across the table. He spoke, too, as if to an officer.

The German picked up the papers and passed them back across the table without looking at them. "What is your name and town?" he continued, in the same dignified tone.

The boy passed the book back again, indicating with his thumb the lines where that identification was stamped. Again the German refused to look, returning the book with a repetition of his question: "Your name and town?"

"Brück-Jean; of Luneville, near Nancy."

"Age?"

"Twenty and a half."

"Second year of service?"

"No, sir. First."

"H'm! Waiter!" Now he spoke like a German again. "Fetch us a bottle of champagne." He eyed the

boy. Then he relapsed comfortably back into his seat, observing: "As for me, I'm from Lorraine—Metz."

The soldier broke into a thick sweat, mopped his face with his red bandanna, stuffed his hands anywhere from embarrassment, and fell to taking off his cap and putting it on again. The audience shrugged shoulders, passed remarks, and tried generally to make it appear that nobody cared to overhear any more.

The wine came, the waiter turned it a lot more than necessary in the ice tub, the cork popped, the German frowned away a third goblet, brought for his wife, cleared his throat again, grasped his glass as if it were beer, and remarked:

"I did my military service forty two years ago, 1870-1871. Under MacMahon. In the artillery. I was a lieutenant—when we finished. Well, here goes! What toast? Old Alsace, eh?"

The soldier rapped glasses sharply, sprang to his feet, and cried ringingly: "*Vive l'Alsace! Et vive la France!*" and drank off every drop. The old man bowed his head, drank and motioned to the soldier to resume his seat.

From his pocketbook he produced a card, which he passed to the boy. "When you come to Lorraine—I say, when you come to Lorraine"—he marked the words—"drop in and see me at my house. Perhaps I can put you up for the night—on your way east, eh? I'm always there, except at Christmas. I've been there for close to forty-three years since—twenty before; and all the time waiting for you to come along. You'll find me at home on the day you come, all right enough. I'll be out on the road looking for you, I guess. H'm!"

"Well now!" He took up a brisker speech. "It's *réveillon* tonight. I say, my boy—shush"—the old man leaned close to whisper—"how much have you on you?"

"Thirty sous." The boy shoved his purse across the table. The old man took it down into his tight lap, extracted a hundred-franc note from the wad in his own billbook, stuffed it into the purse and slipped it to the boy under

the table. His wife remonstrated, in German, to the extent of a syllable or two. The old man's jaws snapped at her once, such a bark as there are words only in German to fit. She held her peace.

"Come now!" he continued to the boy. "Drink off another one and be gone. And have a good time! The toast, now! What do you say? *La Revanche*, eh?"

The soldier stood at attention, drank, put down his glass, worked straight his cap, saluted the old man, then his wife, shook hands heartily with the waiter and resumed the rigid position of attention. The old man heaved out of his seat, surveyed the boy from head to foot, approved of him, and flashed the quick, fleeting salute of old-fashioned French officers.

Before the soldier could wheel and stride for the door the orchestra struck up the "Marseillaise," as only a German orchestra can play it. The soldier marched out with a step which looked able to carry him clean through the Gare Montparnasse opposite. Some students in the far corner burst into song. We foreigners applauded with our spoons, to make it appear that we weren't German, at least, and at the end of the march almost everybody roared rather defiantly.

The old veteran turned to me to speak. He was shivering with emotion. "You are not a Frenchman?" he asked, in German.

"No, American."

"But you sympathize?"

I said yes, although I don't.

"Here is my card. You, too, may come to see me, when you come to Alsace - Lorraine. A Frenchman is lonely in Metz, I can tell you." I was afraid the old man was going to weep.

The card said:

JACOB FRANCKE
Manufacturer of Staple and Fancy Sausages,
Sauerkraut, etc., and General
Delicatessen Wholesaler
9, Wilhelmstrasse
METZ
ALLEMAGNE

I looked at him. He was as German as Bismarck.

BLACK AND WHITE

By K. B. Boynton

O GIRL, thou art a lake of light
Lost in the forest black and white,
And I, a tree
That leans to thee
Above the shadows of the night—

A slender birch of umber gray
That calls thee at the end of day
Through shadows where
The starlights stare
Adown the visionary way.

Oh, white the swan upon thy breast!
Oh, black the tree boles in the west!
And white and black
The dreams come back
And, will-less, droop and drop to rest.

My cold gray leaves are blended dreams
That once were borne on rushing streams,
But, strange, tonight
In pale mid-light
They seek thy passive breast, it seems:

It seems they fall upon thee there,
So cold and calm and gray and fair;
No hand of air
Unseen would dare
Touch fingers to thy sleeping hair.

And when my leaves of dreaming fall
They do not reach thy heart at all,
But lie as dead
On thy young head,
And wither in a sorrow thrall.

They lightly lie on thy young head,
These twilight dreams, these words unsaid,
And night and day
Are gray, are gray,
For thou art dead.

GOOD OLD BALTIMORE

By H. L. Mencken

IN the life of every Baltimorean not to the manner born—that is to say, of every Baltimorean recruited from the outer darkness—there are three sharply defined stages. The first, lasting about a week, is one of surprise and delight—delight with the simple courtesy of the people, with the pink cheeks and honest hips of the girls, with the range and cheapness of the victualry, with the varied loveliness of the surrounding land and water, with the touch of Southern laziness in the air. Thus the week of introduction, of discovery, of soft sitting in the strangers' pew.

Follows now a sudden reaction—and six months of discontent. Baltimore, compared to New York or Chicago, even to Atlanta or Kalamazoo, is indubitably slow. No passion for novelty, no hot yearning for tomorrow, is in her burghers. They change their shirts but once a day—flattery!—flattery!—and their prejudices but once a generation. It is not easy to sell them new goods; it is not easy to make them sell their own goods in a new way. They show, collectively, communally, the somewhat touchy *intransigence* of their ancient banks, their medieval public offices. Mount a soapbox and bawl your liver pills—and they will set their catchpolls on you. Give them a taste of New York brass, of Western wind music—and their smile of courtesy will freeze into a smile of amused contempt, if not into a downright sneer. Naturally enough, the confident newcomer, bounding full tilt into this barbed psychic barrier, feels that he is grossly ill used. The Baltimoreans—think of it!—actually laugh at his pedagogic, revile his high flights of com-

mercial sapience, fling back at him his offers to lift them up! Boors, blockheads, fossils! And so the victim, leaking blood from his metaphysical wounds, sees himself a martyr, pines for home and mother, and issues a proclamation of damnation. Whence arises, beloved, the perennial news that the cobblestones of Baltimore are rough, that the harbor of Baltimore is no compote of roses, that the oysters of Baltimore are going off, that the folk of Baltimore suffer the slings and arrows of *arteriosclerosis*.

Six months of that scorn, that fever, that rebellion. And then, one day, if the gods be kind enough to keep him so long, the rebel finds himself walking down Charles Street hill, from the Cardinal's house toward Lexington Street. It is five o'clock of a fine afternoon—an afternoon, let us say, in Indian summer. A caressing softness is in the air; the dusk is stealing down; lights begin to show discreetly, far back in prim, dim shops. Suddenly a sense of the snugness, the coziness, the delightful intimacy of it all strikes and fills the wayfarer. Suddenly he glows and mellows. Suddenly his heart opens, like a clam reached by the tide. Where else in all Christendom is there another town with so familiar and alluring a promenade? Where else are there so many pretty girls to the square yard? Where else do they bowl along so boldly and yet so properly, halting here to gabble with acquaintances and block the narrow sidewalk, and there to hail other acquaintances across the narrow driveway?

Baltimoreans, filled with strange juices at Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association banquets, talk mag-

nificantly of widening Charles Street, of making it a Fifth Avenue, a Boulevard des Italiens, a Piccadilly. But so far they have never actually come to it—and let us all send up a prayer that they never will! To widen Charles Street would be like giving Serpolette the waist of Brünnhilde—an act of defilement and indecency. The whole enchantment of that incomparable lane lies in its very narrowness, its cheek-by-jowlness, its insidious friendliness.

And in the same elements lies the appeal of Baltimore. The old town will not give you the time of your life; it is not a brazen hussy among cities, blinding you with its xanthous curls, kicking up its legs, inviting you to exquisite deviltries. Not at all. It is, if the truth must come out, a Perfect Lady. But for all its resultant narrowness, its nice ness, its air of merely playing at being a city, it has, at bottom, the one quality which, in cities as in women, shames and survives all the rest. And that is the impalpable, indefinable, irresistible quality of charm.

Here, of course, I whisper no secret; some news of this has got about. Even the fellow who denounces Baltimore most bitterly—the baffled seller of green goods, the scorned and rail-ridden ballyhoo man—is willing, once his torn cartilages have begun to knit, to grant the old town some measure of that bewitchment, or at least to admit that others feel it and justly praise it. He will tell you that, whatever the hunkerousness, the archaic conservatism of the Baltimoreans, they know, at all events, how to cook victuals—in particular, how to cook terrapin *à la Maryland*. Again, he will admit the subtle allurement, almost as powerful as the lure of money, of a city with an ancient cathedral upon its central hill—the only North American city in which it was possible, until very lately, to see a prince of the Holy Church, red-hatted, lean and other-worldly, walking among his people.

So far, indeed, the preëminence of Baltimore is an axiom, a part of the American tradition. It is, by unanimous consent, the gastronomical capital of the New World, and it is also, by unani-

mous consent, the one genuine cathedral city of our fair republic. Other cities, of course, have cathedrals, too—out in the West, I believe, they are run up by the half-dozen—but only in Baltimore is there the authentic cathedral atmosphere. Only in Baltimore is there any reflection of that ecclesiastical efflorescence which gives enchantment to such Old World towns as Seville and Padua, Moscow and Milan. Only in Baltimore is it possible to imagine a procession of monks winding down a main-traveled road, holding up the taxicabs and the trolley cars, and striking newsboys dumb with reverence.

Such is the Baltimore picture that fills the public eye—a scene of banqueting and devotion. Unluckily for romance, there is not much truth in either part of it. The diamond back terrapin, true enough, is native to the Chesapeake marshes, and the see of Baltimore, true enough, is to Catholic America what the see of Rome is to all Christendom; but when you have said that you have said your say. The fact is that the terrapin, once so plentiful that it was fed to the hogs and blackamoors, has long since faded into a golden mist. It is a fowl consumed in Baltimore, as elsewhere, only at long intervals, and as an act of extraordinary debauchery. I have heard tales of ancient gourmets at the Maryland Club, obese, opulent and baggy under the eyes, who eat it daily, or, at any rate, four times a week.

But such virtuosi, in the very nature of things, must be rare. The average Baltimorean is held back from that licentiousness by what the Socialists call economic pressure. He eschews the terrapin for the same reason that he eschews yachting, polygamy and the collection of ceramics. Of the six hundred thousand folk in the town, I venture to say that three hundred thousand have never even seen a genuine diamond back, that four hundred thousand haven't the slightest notion how the reptile is cooked, and that five hundred thousand have never tasted it, nor even smelled it. Conservative figures, indeed. Let other figures support them. *Imprimis*, it is an un-

imaginable indecorum, if not a downright impossibility, to eat a rasher of terrapin without using champagne to wash the little bones out of the tonsils—and champagne costs four dollars a bottle. *Zum zweiten*, an ordinary helping of terrapin—not a whole meal of terrapin, understand, nor a whole terrapin, but an ordinary, six-ounce helping, made up, let us say, of two schnitzels from the flank, a hip, a neck, two claws and three yellow eggs—costs three dollars in the kitchen and from three fifty to four dollars on the table! So an eminent Baltimore chef told me once, dining with me, off duty, in a spaghetti joint.

"But I have eaten diamond back at two fifty," I protested.

"Aha!" said he, and lifted his diabolic brows.

"Then it wasn't genuine terrapin?" I asked in surprise.

"The good God knows!"

"But isn't it just possible that it was?"

"Everything is possible."

More red wine loosed his tongue, and the tale that he told was of hair raising effect upon a passionate eater—a tale of vulgar mud turtles with diamonds photographed upon their backs, of boiled squirrel helping the sophistication, of terrapin eggs manufactured in the laboratory.

"But certainly not at the — Hotel!"

A shrug of the shoulders.

"Or at the —!"

Two shrugs—and the faintest ghost of a snicker.

"But the possibility of detection—the scandal—the riot!"

A frank chuckle, and then:

"In Baltimore there are eighteen men only who know terrapin from—not terrapin. In the United States, thirty-seven."

Alas, the story of the diamond back is not the whole story! Baltimore victualry is afflicted in these days, not merely by a malady of the heart, but by a general paralysis and decay of the entire organism—a sort of progressive coma, working inward from the extremities. That it was once unique,

ineffable, almost heavenly—so much we must assume unless we assume alternatively that all the old-time travelers were liars. For you can't open a dusty "Journal of a Tour in the United States of North America," *circa* 1820, without finding a glowing chapter upon the romantic eating to be had in Baltimore taverns. From the beginning of the century down to the Civil War each successive tourist grew lyric in its praises. That was the Golden Age of Maryland cookery. Then it was that the black mammy of sweet memory, turbaned and oleose, reared her culinary Taj Mahals and attained to her immortality. Then it was that cornbread soared the interstellar spaces and the corn fritter (*not* fritter) was born.

But the black mammy of that arcadian day was too exquisite, too sensitive an artist to last. (The rose is a fragile flower. The sunset flames—and is gone.) Her daughter, squeezed into corsets, failed of her technique and her imagination. The seventies saw the rise of false ideals, of spurious tools and materials—saleratus, self-rising buckwheat, oleomargarine, Chicago lard, the embalmed egg, the carbolated ham, the gas stove. Today the destruction is complete. The native Baltimore cook, granddaughter to kitchen Sapphos and Angelica Kauffmanns, is now a frank mechanic, almost bad enough to belong to a union—a frowzy, scented houri in the more preposterous gauds of yester-year, her veins full of wood alcohol and cocaine, her mind addled by the intrigues of Moorish high society, her supreme achievement a passable boiled egg, a fairish kidney stew or a wholly third rate pot of sprouts.

And if cooking in the home thus goes to the devil in Baltimore, cooking in the public inns departs even further from its old high character and particularity. In sober truth, it has almost ceased to exist—that is to say, as a native art. The Baltimore hotel chef of today shows his honorable discharges from the Waldorf-Astoria, the Auditorium Annex, the Ponce de Leon. He is simply a journeyman cook, a single member of the undistinguished world brotherhood; and

the things he dishes up in Baltimore are exactly the same things he was taught to dish up in New York, or Chicago, or wherever it was that he escaped from the scullery. Good food, I do not deny, but not of Baltimore, Baltimorean. Demand of him a plate of lye hominy in the Talbot County manner, with honest hog meat at its core—and he will fall in a swoon. Ask him for soft crabs—and he will send them to the table in cracker dust! Talk to him of chitlings—and you will talk to a corpse. The largest oyster he has ever heard of is about the size of a watch. The largest genuine Maryland oyster—the veritable bivalve of the Chesapeake, still to be had at oyster roasts down the river and at street stands along the wharves—is as large as your open hand. A magnificent, matchless reptile! Hard to swallow? Dangerous? Perhaps to the novice, the dastard. But to the veteran of the raw bar, the man of trained and lusty esophagus, a thing of prolonged and kaleidoscopic flavors, a slow slipping saturnalia, a delirium of joy!

Here, it may be, I go too far. Not, of course, in celebrating the Chesapeake oyster, but in denouncing the Baltimore hotels. Let me at once ameliorate the indictment by admitting exceptions. There are hotel cooks in Baltimore, I freely grant, who have absorbed a lingering secret or two from the native air—not many, but still a few. At one hotel, for example, you will find, amid a welter of *à la's*, the authentic soft crab of Maryland, cooked at the open fire, pronged to a sliver of country bacon—and *without* cracker dust! At another, perhaps, a very decent plate of jowl and sprouts. At a third, pawnhoss in season, fresh from the woodland sausage vats of Frederick County—and fried properly in slender shingles. At a fourth, Ann' Ran'el strawberries with their arteries still pulsing. At a fifth, genuine Patuxent sweet potatoes, candied in their own sugar. And always, in the background, there is that last truly Baltimore hotel—sole survivor of the glorious dynasty of Guy's and Barnum's—wherein, at the lunch bar down in the cellar, the oyster potpie is still a

poem and a passion, a dream and an intoxication, a burst of sunlight and a concord of sweet sounds.

Oh, the mellowness of it! Oh, the yellowness of it! A rich, a nourishing, an exquixite dish! A pearl of victualry, believe me, and not for swine. The man who appreciates and understands it, who penetrates to the depths of its perfection, who feels and is moved by those nuances which transfigure it and sublimate it and so lift it above all other potpies under the sun—that man is of the lineage of Brillat-Savarin, and no mere footman of metabolism. But the oyster pie, however ravishing, is yet but transitory—here today and gone tomorrow, a mirage as much as a miracle—for no cultured Baltimorean will eat an oyster, dead or alive, if the mercury in the tube be above thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit.

Thus experience speaks. A thawed oyster is, at best, a dubious oyster, and may be a downright homicidal oyster. Visitors gobble the bivalve far into May and June, and then bulge the hospitals and morgues; the native, save drink masters him, is more cautious. But even if the oyster pie is thus a fleeting guest, there yet remains crab soup, its cousin and rival. I mean here, of course, not the vulgar crab soup of the bar-rooms, full of claws and tomato skins and with a shinbone as its base, but crab bisque, of white meat, country butter and rich cream all compact. You can find it, from May to October, just where the oyster pie blooms and glows from November to March, and that is, to give away the secret at last, in the lower eating room of the Rennert Hotel. There Maryland cookery lives out the palsied evening of its days. There the oyster pie, crab soup, boiled tongue and spinach, turkey wings with oyster sauce, early York cabbage, Charles County ham and a few other such doddering thoroughbreds make their last gallant stand against the filet mignon, the Wiener schnitzel and all the rest of the exotic *à la's*. When the old Carrollton went up in smoke, in 1904, the planked shad, as planks and shad were known to Lord Fairfax and Charles

Carroll, vanished from the earth. And when, in the course of human events, the Remmert gives way to some obscene skyscraper, the last genuine oyster potpie will say good-bye.

Sic transit gloria—and whatever the bad Latin is for eating with the heart. Baltimore, of course, yet offers decent food to the stranger within her gates, but it is food he knows at home and is tired of. The native idiocrasy, the local color, save as I have indicated, are gone. One must have a guide to find a plate of indubitable hog and hominy; even so noble a dish as crab Creole, a Louisiana invention raised to the stars by Maryland crabs and Maryland genius, now hides at Joyce's, an eating house remote from the white lights of the town. And for Chesapeake oysters of adult growth, the visitor must go, as I have said, down the river, a hazardous journey in winter, or brave the stenches and shanghaiers of the docks.

So, too, with the legendary processions of monks, to which we now come back after a long excursion into victualry. One looks for them in the American Rome—and finds them only after a hard search. Go out to Paca Street and peep through the portcullis of St. Mary's Seminary, *alma mater* of unnumbered bishops (and perhaps of some pope of day after tomorrow), and one may see sedate scholastics treading the shady walks, digesting their Angelic Doctor and their fast day mackerel; go out to St. Joseph's, on the Frederick Road, and one may see paunchy Passionists pottering about their grapevines—learned and venerable men; drop down Maiden Choice Lane to St. Mary's Industrial School, and one may happen upon half a dozen young Xaverians, their cassocks flapping about their legs, helping their boys at market gardening or baseball. But of ecclesiasticism in any genuine and general sense, Baltimore is bare. No Neapolitan love of processions and ceremonials, no liking for following the crozier and bowing low to the passing holy image, no feeling for the poetry and beauty of religious show seems to be left in her people. Those of them who cling to the

old faith have taken away from it, I think, much that is of its essence and more that is of its spell. They go to church on Sundays; they are faithful, they are reverent, they are pious. But the old romance has gone out of their piety.

Thus the effect of the American air, of a diverse and enticing life, of the so-called enlightenment. But is that really an enlightenment which reduces gilt and scarlet to drab and gray? Alas, I am pagan enough, if not Catholic enough, to doubt it—pagan enough to lament that the pomp and circumstance visible in the ancient cathedral on a high day have so little echo in the town on all days. But whatever the pity, there is the fact. The American Rome sets no feast of crosses and banners for the pilgrim's eye; he may wander its streets for days, and yet fall upon no single hint that Holy Church has here her Western sentry post. The truth is, in brief, that the Romanism of Baltimore has a lot more of tradition in it than of reality. To speak of it, to assume it, to posit it with delight or with horror, has become a sort of convention, like the habit of calling Broadway gay. But go behind that convention to things as they are, and you will make the rather startling discovery that Baltimore, for all its primacy, is scarcely a Catholic town at all, but a stronghold of dour and dismal Puritanism—a town in which faith has lost inner beauty as well as outer ceremonial, and joy has gone with beauty. I mean, of course, joy in the Greek sense, the joy rooted in innocence, the joy of a Neapolitan procession. The Baltimore of today is not innocent. Its curse, indeed, is its conscience, an extraordinarily alert and sensitive organ. And to attend and poke that conscience, to keep alive the notion that all that is joyful must be sinful and all that is good must give pain, there are hordes of male vestals in chokers and white cravats, virtuosi of virtue, moralists clerical and moralists lay, hounds of happiness, specialists in constructive and esoteric sin.

Few things that stir the blood of man and lift him out of his wallow of lost

hopes are permitted by the laws of Maryland. It is unlawful in Baltimore to throw confetti on New Year's Eve; it is unlawful, without elaborate permissive process, for a harpist to accompany flute music on the public street; it is a crime to sell chewing gum on Sunday, or to play tennis, or to have one's chin shaved, or to give a concert—or to go hawking! Fact! The Blue Laws were passed in 1723, and go back to the hell fire harangues of Cotton Mather, but every effort to mitigate and modernize them is opposed with truly savage violence. Under them, the impresario who had an orchestra play the nine symphonies of Beethoven on nine successive Sunday afternoons would be liable to a minimum fine of \$25,550 and 220 days in jail.

Remember, I said "minimum." The maximum would be \$127,600 and fifteen months—and Baltimore judges, being elected officers, sometimes woo the parsons in their sentences. No wonder the festive drummer, finding himself in Baltimore on a Saturday night, flees in hot haste. Even if Washington, but forty miles away, be his furthest bourne, he may at least divert himself there, on the ensuing Sunday, with moving pictures. But not in Baltimore. Baltimore fears such Babylonish lecheries. Baltimore sees the flickering film as something unspeakably secular and demoniacal. On week days it may be tolerated, as a concession to Adam's fall. But on the Sabbath it must rest.

Yet, for all that brummagem goody-goodness, that bogus virtue, that elaborate hocus-pocus of chemical purity, that grotesque conspiracy against beauty and festivity and joy, there remains the indubitable charm of the old town. Stay there only long enough and it will infallibly descend upon you and consume you, and you will remain a Baltimorean, in spirit if not in bodily presence, to the end of your days. And it is not merely the charm of the picturesque, nor of the South, nor of the ancient, nor of the celebrated and honorable—though Baltimore delights the painter, and stands sentry for the South, and looks back to the seventeenth century, and has given

the nation not only heroes but also poets to sing them. The roots and sources of that charm, in truth, go deeper than that.

Trace them down and you will come at last, I believe, to certain genuine peculiarities, to certain qualities which may not be so conveniently ticketed, to certain traits and combinations of traits which, shading into one another, give the net effect of uncommon and attractive individuality, of something not remote from true distinction. The authentic Baltimorean, the Baltimorean of Baltimoreans born and ever filled with that fact, the Baltimorean lifted above all brute contact and combat with the native blacks and the invading Goths and Huns—in brief, the Baltimorean whose home you must enter if you would really know Baltimore—is a fellow who touches civilization at more places, perhaps, than any other American. There is a simplicity about him which speaks of long habituation to his own opinions, his own dignities, his own class. In a country so largely dynamic and so little static that few of its people ever seem (or are) quite at home in their own homes, he represents a more settled and a more stately order. There yet hangs about him some of the repose, the air, the fine superiority of the Colonial planter, despite the pianola in his parlor and his daily journey to a skyscraper. One sees as the setting of his ultimate dream, not a gilded palace and a regiment of servitors, not the bent necks of multitudes and a brass band playing "Hail to the Chief!" but only his own vine and fig tree and the good red sun of Maryland beating down.

I speak, of course, of the civilized, the cultured, the mellowed, the well rooted Baltimorean, not of the mere mob man living in Baltimore. This Baltimorean makes up, putting the test as low as you will, but a small minority of Baltimore's people, and yet no long acquaintance with him is necessary to show you that whatever is essentially Baltimorean in the town is the reflection of his philosophy and his personality. The black, nearly a hundred thousand strong, is a mere cipher. Indirectly, as I shall

presently show, he has greatly influenced the communal life, but directly he is as little to be considered as the cab horses. And the swarming foreigner, with his outlandish customs and his remoteness from the stream of tradition, is almost as negligible. Go down into Albemarle or President streets, and you are as far from Mt. Vernon Place or Peabody Heights or Harlem Park or Walbrook or Roland Park or any other genuine part of Baltimore as you are from the North Pole.

And yet it is precisely this vast body of *servi* and *ignobiles*, once all black, but of late grown disconcertingly yellow and white, that must be blamed for most of the austerity of Baltimore, and by secondary effect, for that peculiar hominess which is always marked as the distinguishing quality of the town. It was the darkey who inspired, in the years long past, many of the draconian statutes which yet linger upon the books, and many of the stern habits and self-restraints which reinforce them. Even today it is common to hear a Baltimorean say in defense of a given prohibition, not that he himself is opposed to the antithetical privilege, or thinks it, in itself, immoral or demoralizing, but that it would be unwise to let the nigger taste it. And if not the nigger, then the foreigner newly come. So, for example, with the Blue Laws above mentioned. The Baltimorean's fear of a more humane Sunday is not a fear that it would imperil his own soul, but a fear that the Lithuanian and the Sicilian, aided and abetted by the native Ethiop, would make of it a debauch. And so he clings to his ancient rigors.

To what has all of this brought us? To the fact, in brief, that the conditions of the Baltimorean's life have thrown him upon himself, that they have forced him to cultivate those social qualities which center particularly about the home and are inseparable from the home. It is a New Yorker's tendency, once he attains to ease, to make his home merely one of the hotels at which he stops. In the end, perhaps, it becomes the least of these hotels: desiring to show special favor to a guest, he will

hesitate between his club, a favorite grillroom and his own hearth. The training and traditions of the Baltimorean all pull in a different direction. He cannot quite rid himself of the notion that, until a newcomer has stretched comfortably in his dining room, and admired the children and the family portraits, and examined the old water pitcher brought from England in 1735, and petted the cat, and fingered the old books in the library upstairs, and praised the bad biscuits of black Gwendolyn in the kitchen, with her high heel shoes, her eminence in the Grand United Order of Nazarenes and her fond hopes of wedding a *colorado maduro* barrister—that, until all this ceremonial has been gone through, he and the newcomer are yet strangers. Down to ten or twelve years ago, I believe, it was still considered a bit indecent for a Baltimore gentleman to take his own wife to a hotel for supper after the theater. That was not asceticism, but mere habit. The social tradition of the town had no concern with public places. The Baltimoreans had so devised their chief joys, for years and years, that the home was the background of every one. And something of that old disposition still lingers.

A quaint town! A singular people! And yet the charm is there! You will miss the prodigal gaiety of New York—the multitude of theaters, the lavishness of entertaining, the elaborate organization of the business of pleasure. Baltimore has, between November and April, but ten performances of grand opera on a metropolitan scale. For her six hundred thousand people there are but three first class theaters. In the whole town there is not a single restaurant, not merely a hotel dining room, worth mentioning to your friends. And yet—and yet—it is not dull, it is not a prison—at least not to the Baltimoreans—at least not to those who get the Baltimore point of view.

What if the Carusos and Farrars pipe their lays but ten times a year? So much greater the joy in hearing them when they come! What if the theaters be but three? Washington, down the

trolley line, has but two. And three are sufficient to house all the plays really worth seeing. Baltimore misses, perhaps, a few that Broadway enjoys—but more that Broadway suffers. And who wants to gobble the *à la's* in a gilded and public hell when a Smithfield ham is on the sideboard at home, with beer on ice to wash it down, and a box of smuggled cigars in the lower drawer of the old

secretary—and the hour invites to a neighborly palaver with Smith and Benson and Old Taylor, while the ladies exchange fashions and scandals, novel plots and obstetrics in the parlor? What fool would be in New York tonight, dodging the taxicabs, blinded by the whiskey signs, robbed by the waiters? Who would leave Baltimore, once Baltimore has taken him to her arms?



A CABARET DANCER

By Zoë Akins

COMPLETELY of our day and of our mood,
You dance and charm the multitude;
No venerable tradition guides your feet—
O Pagan of café and street!

With accents subtle and strange energy,
And a repose more strange to me,
You step and glide—and step—and stop—and sway—
And step—and stop—and step—and glide away. . . .

The woman in your arms is like a snake,
Responsive to each move you make;
Watchful and eager, following, alert,
Ensnared and charmed—too grave to flirt—
Aware of every thought she reads your eyes,
And gives obedience, and tries
To please you utterly; her face is proud,
And something perfect is allowed
To grace you both. . . .

Abandoned and intense,
But with a sort of innocence,
You step—and stop—and step—and glide—and go
Through measured movements, swift and slow. . . .

Ennui is vanquished while we watch you dance
Your sensual, naïve romance.



DEAD men tell no tales, which is why so many widows find it easy to marry again.

A SALE OF A MEMORY

By Helen Davies

ATALL, good-looking man, seated at his desk, busy with his papers, glanced up, intending to ask the intruder to await his leisure, but forgot to do so under the influence of the striking personality which confronted him.

It was a woman, slender in outline, with dark hair and a face interesting for its contradictory characteristics—the full lips denoted impulse, the clear gray eyes had learned caution, the chin was indeterminate, the forehead resolute. His eyes absorbed the details of her appearance: the well cut tailor-made coat and skirt, the past fashion of which was not apparent to masculine perception; cheeks flushed by air and exercise, eyes at once timid and imploring, a slender hand in a shabby glove, clutching a manuscript. A cultured voice inquired: "Am I speaking to Mr. Bottome? I have called to enter a story in the prize contest."

His heart sank. Another aspirant for literary fame! Their name was legion; from early morning until late at night they knocked at his door—the rich, the poor, the middle-aged, the young, possessing one common attribute: that of being able to produce words—endless, empty words.

How many times he had cursed the policy of the magazine which, to increase its circulation, had offered inducements to new subscribers! Even in his sleep he could repeat the advantageous offer: "One thousand dollars to be divided into prizes: five hundred to be paid for the best story of real life; two hundred and fifty each for the best tale of adventure. Previous experience in writing not necessary. Manuscripts judged fairly, and on their merits." He smiled

wearily, with the well worn inquiry: "Is this your first story?"

"Yes," replied the woman naïvely. "How did you guess?" She smiled, illuminating the monotonous routine of manuscript reading with such a flush of hitherto undreamed-of possibilities that Francis Bottome was moved to prolong the interview and say impulsively: "Do sit down, if you can spare a few moments to tell me about your story."

"There is little to tell"—adding blushingly: "I'm afraid you will speedily discover that I know nothing of the art of composition, except what I learned at school. I cannot work up to a climax, and though I have written and rewritten my poor little tale many times, it always comes to the same conclusion. Its only possible merit lies in the fact that it is 'A Bit of Real Life,' as I have entitled it."

The keen-witted man, watching her, instantly decided: "Poor soul, driven by necessity to make capital out of her emotional experience," mentally concluding that if the manuscript contained even the germ of an idea which could be hammered into shape, he would do his best to make it salable. Then he said reassuringly: "Realism is what we editors are always seeking, and, instead, finding only artificiality—wooden characters, stilted speech and studied gesture."

"I have little equipment for this work," was the hesitating response, "save a fair education, a sense of humor, some imagination and power of observation."

"Miss King," said the editor, "I see your name and address on your manuscript. If I may, I will call when I have

read your story, and we will talk it over. I am always looking for the story with 'uplift.' I have grown so weary of sordidness and variations on the Ten Commandments."

"Oh," exclaimed the woman in consternation, "my story will not help anyone. I have no mission as a preacher. I thought only of helping myself."

"I should like to help you," was the grave reply.

Dorothea King had hitherto encountered but two types of men: those hungry with desire, and those who had coldly estimated the value of her nervous energy. But here was an inconceivable variation, with kindly eyes devoid of ulterior motive. As the door closed behind her, Francis Bottome groaned: "What in thunder made me want to help a woman I never saw before? But her eyes were appealing. And what gave her those sad lines round her lips?"

He opened the manuscript, read the first page languidly, then reread it and went on with rapidly increasing interest. The office boy knocked unheeded; the telephone jangled in vain; through the window came the noise of countless, hurrying feet, the shrill shriek of an automobile, the sharp clang of a fire engine, the grind of steel on steel as the girders of a skyscraper rose slowly in the air. But the man, wrapt in the glamour of the story, stood in summer sights and sounds. A thrush's song trilled sweet; the scent of lilac filled the air; the wind was stirring through the larch trees; the gold of sunset flared within the west; the lovers lingered in the lane.

Then, with the ending of the manuscript, the spell dissolved. The editor sprang to his feet. "How did that woman evolve such a tale?" he exclaimed. "One glance at her face would convince the most skeptical that the experiences are purely imaginative, and yet I fancied from her manner that the story was her own. It is told with intuitive sympathy and pathos. It is miles ahead of that trash"—and he contemptuously smote the pile of manuscripts lying beside him on the desk.

When Francis Bottome finally stood in Dorothea's sitting room, he was fully

conscious of the refinement and individuality with which she had invested her shabby belongings. His eyes wandered to the old gilt clock, which gaily struck with shameless irresponsibility, to a pair of mutilated Dresden figures which stood beside it on the mantel shelf. The two or three photographs, an open book lying beside a bit of needle-work and a gold thimble spoke of home to the busy man, whose life alternated between office and boarding house.

"I have never had a home," he said slowly, "for my mother died when I was only a little chap."

"I have fought desperately to keep mine," was the quick response. "It has meant so much to me to have even this poor refuge. So much, indeed, that even that old clock seems a friend, and I am confident the shepherd would share his fruit with me, could he but escape the surveillance of his faithful shepherdess."

Francis Bottome looked at the speaker keenly. She appeared younger without her hat. Her gown was cleverly fitted, her hair a marvel of curly ingenuity. Then he said slowly:

"Have you forgotten the prize contest? I fancied that would be your first consideration."

Dorothea paled. "I didn't dare," she faltered. "I have hoped so desperately—yes, even prayed for success." She threw back her head proudly. "You need not be afraid to tell me that I have failed. I am accustomed to misfortune, and strong enough to face realities."

"You are very brave," was the admiring response. "And I find it difficult to convey the impression which your story has made on me. I have been reading manuscripts for fifteen years, yet yours was a revelation—like a breath of fresh air blowing through a close room, an enchanting vista of hitherto undreamed possibilities. I have been impatient to ask you where you learned your delicacy of touch, your fidelity of description. In the meanwhile, here are your laurels. You have been awarded one of the prizes."

Dorothea's eyes filled with tears as she took the proffered cheque. "Oh, the

blessed possibilities of that scrap of paper! If you only knew the hardships—" Her voice broke. "Forgive my personalities," she said after a moment, "and my ignoring your share in my triumph."

"I had no share in it," was the emphatic response. "The story is your own. I did nothing but alter the phrasing here and there where I thought your meaning might be made clearer." Smiling, he added: "It is popularly believed that every woman's life contains material for one story, but a glance at your face would convince anyone of your ignorance of what you have so vividly portrayed. Do gratify my curiosity. Tell me how you evolved your heroine. My heart ached for her childishness, her trusting ignorance. And the villain—that smooth, plausible villain who led her astray—I longed to have him by the throat. And those other men—those hunters of women. How cleverly you depicted that poor girl's moral struggle before yielding to the solicitations of her employer! Yet, if I had been writing that story, I should have made such a woman prefer starvation to humiliation."

"Perhaps she had tried both," was the quiet answer.

Francis laughed. "See the proof of your power in the fact that to me the little heroine was so real that I actually espoused her cause. Then, too—my ideals for women are so high that I do not want even the imaginary ones to tumble off their pedestals."

"Don't you believe that they can climb up again?" said Dorothea slowly. "Is there one law for the man and another for the woman?"

"Yes," said Francis positively, "that is my belief. The safeguard of the home must be feminine purity. But I am tiring you. You must let me urge you next time to choose some theme more in accordance with your own character."

"I shall never write another story," replied Dorothea, with conviction.

"Oh, yes, you will," was the positive assertion. "Your heart will need the outlet. Your readers will demand it."

Dorothea laughed a little harshly. "I

shall not have many readers with your indulgent eyes. But with all my heart I thank you, and you must not deny your share in my success."

"It is your own," insisted the man. "But you look tired. I must go. You will let me come again? You will let us become friends—real friends, with the one unfaltering ideal—that of your literary success?"

The windows of the Union Club were open in the reading room, when a man, walking with the aid of a cane, settled himself by a table covered with papers and magazines. Recovering from a sharp attack of gout, he pessimistically reflected that his youth was fleeing, and the future loomed drearily, suggestive of flannel bandages and enforced dietary restrictions. For distraction he turned over the magazines, and seeing the latest number of *Insight*, recalled a discussion he had overheard of a story, which, on its appearance in that periodical, had not only won for its author a prize of five hundred dollars, but an instantaneous recognition of the originality and pathos of this "Bit of Real Life," as it was entitled.

Lloyd Thompson smiled sarcastically as a few of the overheard comments fitted through his mind. "The wonderful knowledge of human nature shown by this new writer"— "The story must have been a personal experience"— "No one would dare to depict an actual occurrence with such realism." What a story he could write did he possess the faculty of reeling off words from his pen! If he could only describe his experiences in fighting his way to success! He adjusted his eyeglasses, took up and opened the magazine and found the story, confessing to himself some curiosity as to a woman's conception of "life."

The opening sentences were convincing, evidently the description of an existing locality. He read on with deepening interest, until, at the conclusion of the story, the magazine slipped from his grasp and fell upon the floor, and he sat staring into the fire. Then he snatched up and perused the story again, assuring

himself that it was no chance resemblance which had so stirred him.

He knew the spot so vividly described in the printed page under the magic of the writer's pen. Again he sauntered in that shady lane. He was not alone. He could have sworn that a girl trod lightly by his side, with a soft hand in his own. It was years since he had even seen a flowering lilac bush, but now their fragrance filled the room, overpowering the staleness of burnt tobacco and printers' ink. The bright morning sun streamed across the floor, yet for him the west flared in sunset glory, "as down in the meadow, under a tree, were a boy and girl and love's delight."

He woke from the glamour thrown about him. A throb of resentment surged in him at the woman who had sold what should have been sacred.

"Pshaw!" he thought contemptuously. "Women are all alike, respecting nothing," and the profanation involved in the sale of a memory seemed more damnable than that involved in the traffic of a body.

He read the story again, and his resentment shifted from its writer to himself. What a pitiful part he had performed on that mimic stage! He had strutted, mouthed and then played what—a villain's role? He flushed. He had never thought of himself in that guise. In fact, he had completely forgotten the incident. It had been hidden by the dirt of living, the petty, accumulative dust of everyday.

He set himself soberly to recall every detail. He had intended to go back to the village, but was prevented, and when he could have gone, he had lost the desire to do so. How many years had slipped away? Ten? No—actually it had happened over twenty years ago, when she had been sixteen and he a boy of twenty. He tried to recall his appearance. Then his forehead had been unlined, his eye clear, his hair thick and dark. Would she recognize him now? He shifted his position, and saw himself in the mirror. His hair was gray; his eyes were bleared, his figure inclined to corpulency. He had become a prosperous, well fed man,

indulging the gratification of appetite until the spiritual had been smothered in the grosser envelope of flesh.

Dorothea—what of her? He recalled her beauty, her generosity—what a royal giver she had been—trusting, believing! Again he flushed, the deep, uncomfortable red of middle age. He sprang up, forgetful of his lameness. He had met the editor of *Insight*, and a note to him would secure the writer's address. A boy's impatience surged in his veins. "Dorothea!" he exclaimed. At the appeal of his voice and heart, he felt the firm clasp of her hand and the passionate contact of her life.

II

WHEN Lloyd Thompson actually stood breathless in Dorothea's little room after that formidable climb up five flights of stairs, he gazed at his surroundings with an air of bewilderment.

Of late years he had grown so accustomed to the luxurious newness of modern hotels, with their plethora of cushions, rugs and comfortable chairs, that he had entirely forgotten the appearance of objects used necessarily after their beauty had disappeared. The threadbare rug appealed to his sympathy; it was so utterly inadequate to keep out the drafts from the badly constructed floor. The shabby chairs were pathetic, the table with blotter and ink-stand such a miserable travesty of a writing desk, the cheap clock on the shelf a distinct irritant as it gaily struck twelve, when by his expensive watch it was nearly three in the afternoon. He actually scowled at the simpering shepherd and shepherdess, posturing with their ridiculous fruit, instantly deciding that the entire furnishings should be relegated to the ash heap when . . . How could Dorothea resist the combined appeal of his affections and prosperity? Where was she? He grew impatient, for the grimy person who had admitted him had assured him she was "sure to be here soon."

He saw Francis Bottome's photo-

graph, and near it a few fading carnations in a vase, and thought scornfully: "I suppose *he* sent them—and cannot do it often. Those writing chaps never have much money. When she is my wife, she shall have a bushel sent fresh from the florist every day."

He heard the rustle of a dress, caught a faint breath of orris, and, turning, saw Dorothea. She looked older than his remembrance of her had led him to expect. There were lines of experience round her eyes and wistfulness in her lips. But she was still magnetic, compelling, and afresh he felt her charm and realized that any man might be proud to call her wife.

"You have come back *now!*" The words were breathed rather than spoken.

Lloyd Thompson regained his self-confidence. "Yes," he replied quickly. "I read the story. I never rested until I obtained your address." He choked, came nearer to where she still stood, her hand resting on the table. "Our story," he emphasized. Then, indignantly: "How could you sell our story? It was all there—the descriptions of our looks and the very words we spoke. Nothing was altered but our names and that of the village."

Dorothea did not speak, and he continued volubly: "I thought there were some things women held sacred, but I was wrong. You have had your revenge. I don't deny that I deserved it." He held out his hand. "But I have come to make what reparation I can. My affection for you still exists."

With a touch of the boy she so well remembered, he went on: "I have come to say I am sorry. It is childishly inadequate; I will not offer any excuse save that I swear I never realized how contemptible I had been until I saw it all in print. I fully intended to go back as I had promised, but after I reached the city it was impossible, I was so absorbed in pushing on, succeeding. I was sent West, then to Japan; then it was too late. I didn't hear of the deaths of your father and mother until long after they occurred. When I wrote, the letters were returned marked 'not

found.' I lost all trace of you until I read your story—*our* story.

"I can offer you wealth, an honorable position. Leave this old life with its restrictions." He looked contemptuously at the shabby furnishings and the mutilated china figures. "Leave it all," he reiterated. "Come with me to the nearest minister."

He hesitated, then, laying his hand on the woman's arm, said abruptly: "But first tell me where truth and fiction began in that story. Surely you embroidered it with your imagination; you never suffered as your heroine did. That heartrending account of your search for work, those humiliations, those insults." He was visibly moved. "You were never subjected to such indignities. You never had to accept the protection of your employer as the price of work. You never had—"

Dorothea threw back her head, and looking him squarely in the eyes, interposed, unflinchingly:

"It is not necessary to multiply examples. My story was true in every particular." She paused, then added ironically: "Do you still want me as your wife?"

"God!" exclaimed Lloyd Thompson, and collapsed into a chair.

There was absolute silence in the room for several minutes. Then Dorothea said slowly: "When I learned the inevitable ending of your folly, wild with fear and dread of discovery, I, too, came blindly to the city. Alone, I lay in the hospital, where my child was born." Her voice trembled. "I thanked God when its tiny troubled life was over. I thanked Him that my child would never know its father was a coward."

"Never *that!*" broke from the man's lips. "Selfish, thoughtless, ignorant of responsibility, but not that. I meant to go back."

"I know only that you didn't," was the uncompromising reply.

"But the story, Dorothea—how could you?"

She interrupted him scornfully. "I will tell you how. I had parted with everything of value that I had. I had learned actually to count the cost of

food, to know on how little one could sustain life. I had just twenty dollars in the world when I lost my position as stenographer when the firm which employed me failed. I had answered advertisements until I was footsore. If I lost my shelter, it meant those pitiless streets, those prowling, human wolves." She shivered. "Then I took my story, dressed in all the bravery of thought and phrase which I could muster, and thrusting myself into the marketplace, I sold my wares for a handful of silver to feed my body, to keep a roof above my head. And the sentimental sold out to the successful novelist."

The man groaned, then said slowly: "But the future, Dorothea—what of that? I acknowledge my responsibility for"—he swallowed hard, then continued resolutely—"for all your misfortunes. Give me now the right to protect and provide for you. Let us forget. Let us look forward."

Dorothea's eyes blazed. "You? If I were starving, I would not take a crumb from your hand! In those old days I did love you, when I knew no standard of comparison. But now I have learned to measure you against a *true* man—to appreciate the restraint, the rarity of his caresses compared to those I remember." She blushed furiously. "The past is dead; let us bury it now and forget."

"Does *he* know?" The question came slowly from stiffened lips.

Dorothea smiled, as glancing at Francis Bottome's picture, she carefully pushed a fading rose back into the vase, as though hoping to prolong its existence. "No," she replied emphatically. "No, he doesn't know. Please God, he never shall."

Lloyd Thompson started. "Dorothea," he exclaimed, "you cannot do it! You cannot live a lie. You will betray yourself in a thousand unforeseen ways. Life would be easier with me. I know. You know that I know. The past will bind us together. I have never loved another woman. Those who have crossed my path have succeeded only in arousing a fleeting emotion."

Dorothea shook her head. "Never!" she exclaimed. "Never! It sounds

brutal, but it is true. I have outgrown you. Life with Francis Bottome promises such hitherto undreamed-of possibilities. I will be what he thinks I am."

Thompson looked at her steadfastly. In all these prosperous years he had taken what he desired, developing logically from the self-indulgent young man into one in whom wish and accomplishment had become simultaneous processes.

He rose stiffly. "Some day you will regret your decision. We must be what we have made ourselves. Changed surroundings do not alter character; they only intensify it."

Dorothea had been married about six months, and was waiting her husband's return from his office. Her experience had developed resolute lines around her lips and new watchfulness in her eyes. More and more clearly daily and hourly intimacy with the man she loved was revealing that they had no common meeting ground. She dared not speak of her past, dreading that look or gesture might betray what must be forever hidden. Even in her moments of most intimate revelation, she was forced to be watchful, lest he might wonder how she had gained her knowledge of what most appealed to his sex. She was experiencing the blank dismay of a child who, on capturing a coveted butterfly, opens his hand only to discover that the expected charm has vanished, the evanescent beauty crushed beyond recognition.

She glanced round the room, to which she had brought the Dresden figures and the old clock, now supplemented by an accurate one in a neat leather case. The bookshelves were full; a pile of magazines lay on the table beside a large box of cigarettes. A fully equipped desk faced her, with immaculate blotter, sharpened pencils, new pen and a pile of untouched manuscript paper.

Dorothea carefully straightened the papers and glanced impatiently at the clock. The door opened and her husband entered the room.

"You are soaking wet!" exclaimed his wife. "And you coughed incessantly

last night. Do go and change; tea will be ready as soon as you are."

Francis kissed her. "If I could only tell you what a joy it is to find you waiting!"

"Then I do make you happy?" cried Dorothea, impulsively clinging to him regardless of wet coat, and mentally reiterating: "It is worth it—worth any price I have to pay."

Francis returned in a shabby smoking jacket, and luxuriously stretched his long length in his easy chair. He accepted his cup of tea gratefully. "This is good. I have had a weary day. Wakefield is off, and I have been reading such rubbish. Why does every idiot who can buy pad and pencil consider the outfit the only necessary qualification for literary effort?"

Dorothea laughed. "Drink your tea. Then you will have more mercy on poor literary aspirants. Remember how kind you were to me."

Francis took his cup and drained it thirstily; then he glanced at the blank papers on the desk. "What—no results yet?" he exclaimed disappointedly. "Not even a beginning?"

"Oh," replied Dorothea quickly, "there never will be anything written there. I wish you would understand that there never can be another story."

"But I don't believe it," was the earnest retort. "As I have said before, any woman who could write as convincingly as you did must be able to repeat the experiment. It will be a real grief to me if you do not follow up your success. I am quite ready to sink into the subordinate position of husband to 'the clever Mrs. Bottome.'"

"Nonsense, Francis," was the emphatic response. "I wish you would believe me when I say I can never write another story. Please let me put away the paper. It is a constant reproach."

"I wanted to be a spur to your laziness," said her husband, smiling. Then he added soberly: "It was a great surprise to me that nowhere in our travels did the overmastering impulse seize you to snatch pen and paper and portray some of the marvels which we saw."

"Perhaps, when you know the truth

about the story," Dorothea said deliberately, "you will understand the futility of urging me to write."

"The truth!" he repeated. "Why, Dorothea, you told me you had invented the story."

Dorothea sighed, and impatiently pushed back a stray lock of hair. "I amplified the story, but the plot was absolutely true—told me by a friend who was herself the heroine."

"God!" burst from the man's lips. "How could the woman live who had been dragged through such vileness?" Then, turning abruptly to his wife: "And you, dear, how could you have such a friend? How could you have come in contact with such a creature?"

"Hush, hush!" exclaimed Dorothea, laying a restraining hand on his arm. "My poor friend does not deserve harsh condemnation, for she suffered bitter punishment for her transgression. I met Lilius Hone at Mrs. Hurd's establishment, where I once worked as a cloak model. She was the only one of the girls with whom I felt any sympathy. She was shy and reserved, but finally I won her confidence and her story, only to betray the one and sell the other."

"You shall not call such a woman friend," retorted Francis savagely.

Dorothea looked and voiced her astonishment.

"You call my poor heroine hard names, but she was not vile, only a puppet of circumstance. Young, impulsive, she should have been a good wife, a good mother, but circumstances conspired to pull her down. She was poor, friendless, unfortunately attractive. She could not starve. She was forced to accept what life offered, though the bread was bitter in her mouth. Surely you would not condemn her utterly—" She paused, as though the decision were momentous, instead of merely an expression of opinion.

Francis laughed. "Don't be so serious over that poor girl's troubles. You are a specious pleader, which speaks better for your kind heart than for your good judgment. But promise me, dear,

that never again will you trifle with the truth."

Dorothea started and turned pale.

"My ideas for women are so high," he continued thoughtfully, "that I cannot endure to have your lips utter even an evasion. I appreciate your loyalty to the woman you sought to screen, but I could never comprehend how a man could live with a false woman. A lie would kill my love and me."

The following afternoon she was walking briskly down the street, conscious that she had been detained longer than she had anticipated at her dressmaker's and must hasten to greet her husband on his return from his office. Hurrying, she failed to notice footsteps keeping pace with hers, until suddenly she saw Lloyd Thompson by her side.

"At last," he said, bowing and falling into step with her. "If you could but know how I have haunted the places where I thought you most likely to be met! And actually this is my first glimpse of you since that day when we stood face to face, before your marriage. Tell me about it—are you happy?"

Dorothea looked soberly at him, replying gravely: "You will never meet us in theaters, or crowded galleries. My husband is far from strong, and we live very quietly. I do not know by what right you inquire for my happiness," she demanded imperiously.

"Dorothea," he said, "you can never forget I was the father of your child. That link binds us so that you must be to me as no other woman, and I must be to you as no other man. I do not care who takes my place—he can be only my successor."

Quick tears filled the woman's eyes. "How dare you force me to remember what I am struggling to forget?"

"You would have been happier with me," said the man deliberately. "You would have been at ease. Your face shows you have never forgotten. You never can. How could you have expected happiness, compelled to live forever on guard—conscious that at any moment the mask may slip from your face and you stand revealed—as what?"

Dorothea turned imploring eyes to

him. "Lloyd," she cried imploringly, "let me go! You have gratified your curiosity in regard to me. Believe me when I tell you I never loved anyone as I love my husband, and that love is also my torture. I never lie down at night without thanking God that another day has gone without revealing my secret. I never rise in the morning without saying to myself: 'Perhaps now on the breakfast table there may be a letter; perhaps I, by unguarded look or word, may betray myself.'"

Thompson looked at her earnestly. "How can you endure it?"

"Because," she cried triumphantly, "my husband loves me!"

"No, no," was the emphatic response. "He loves his ideal, and would start in horror if the woman who bears his name should raise her veil and he glimpsed the reality."

Dorothea drew her breath, then almost whispered: "Perhaps, some day, when we have grown old together, and our love has stood the test of time, I can tell him, and he will separate my sin from me."

Her companion looked at her pityingly. "Oh!" he exclaimed. "Dorothea, what a capacity you have for loving! But no mere man could do that unless he had shared the sin."

Dorothea shrank and bit her lips. "I was and shall be an incorrigible sentimentalist. Good-bye. I hope we shall not meet again. I hate to revive old memories, for I must live absolutely in the present." And before he had recovered from his astonishment she had turned the corner and was out of sight.

She found her husband pacing up and down the floor when she reached home with visible traces of agitation in her flushed cheeks and misty eyes.

"What has made you so late?" he exclaimed. "I have been frightfully worried about you."

"Oh," replied Dorothea blankly, "I was detained at the dressmaker's. Then, hurrying home, I met an old friend. Do not keep me—I am late for dinner already." She escaped to her own room, regretting her impulsive explanation.

The meal was a silent one in spite of

her determined effort to keep the conversation on safe, impersonal topics. Francis was not to be roused from his abstraction. He ate little, but lingered at the table over his one glass of claret and cigarette. When he finally rejoined his wife, he found her at her desk.

"Do not speak to me," she cried gaily. "I am in the throes of composition. Already my opening sentence stares at me from the blank page while I ponder the rival advantages of having the heroine wear pink or blue, and whether the knight shall be clad in fustian, or wear a helmet and carry a blood-red gonfalon."

Francis was in no jesting mood. "It is odd," he said slowly, "that precisely at this moment you should have chosen to commence your literary labors, to which I have so often vainly urged you. Perhaps you would rather write than talk, but I prefer the latter. Come, sit by me and tell me about your old friend."

Dorothea rose from her desk and came slowly toward her husband. "My inspiration ended when you opened the door. What was it you asked—who was my old friend? Lloyd Thompson. I knew him when I was a girl at home."

"That name seems familiar," said her husband musingly. "I remember; that is the name of the man who came and inquired for your address just before our marriage. He said that he had lost sight of you for years, but had read your story and was so impressed by it that he wanted to see you again. Did he come? You have never told me, and I forgot to inquire."

"Yes," replied Dorothea resolutely. "He did come." She was genuinely glad when she could speak the truth, striving by absolute fidelity to detail in small incidents to atone for inevitable deception in that which was greater.

"I remember the man distinctly," said Francis musingly. "I remember thinking that his face showed character and resolution—also a lack of scrupulousness. No matter whom he trod underfoot, he was bound to rise. Where have I read something that recalls that name? Why, I know—" In a sudden

flash of illumination he rose and went to the bookcase.

Dorothea watched him, fascinated by the suddenness of the revelation. Her throat went dry; her breathing became quick, her hands cold. Francis faced her, the magazine he sought for in his hand.

"Dorothea," he exclaimed, "Lloyd Thompson was the villain in your story. He has the identical mannerism—that trick of closing his eyes when speaking, then suddenly opening them. Of course the description of the physical appearance of a boy of twenty and that of a man of forty or forty-five can hardly be the same. Still, allowing for the discrepancy of years, the likeness is striking. Did he, too, know your friend, Lilius Hone?"

Dorothea moved slowly toward the table and examined a small china ornament curiously, saying irrelevantly: "How carelessly Martha dusts! I actually believe my Dresden shepherd has lost another finger." Then, turning to her husband:

"You were saying—"

"I believe," he said slowly, "that Lloyd Thompson was the prototype of the villain in your story."

Dorothea laughed. "As I knew him when I was a girl, probably his face did suggest itself when I was obliged to clothe my imaginary villain in flesh. Never tell him of my perfidy." Again she laughed. "As he didn't recognize his likeness when he read the story, it would be ungracious to force it on his consciousness."

"I'm not likely to meet Mr. Thompson again," was the prompt retort. "Our acquaintance was very casual—a mere introduction at a club. Our paths are not likely to cross, as he is a millionaire, and I—" A fit of coughing interrupted him. Dorothea ran across the room and threw her arms around him.

"You are worth fifty Lloyd Thompsons!" she exclaimed vehemently. "Do tear up that story. I wish I had never written it. No, I cannot say that, for then we should never have met. But do not let us talk about that. I am worried about your cough. You do not

throw it off as you should. I wish I could win another prize contest, and then we would go South. I have always wanted to pick an orange off a tree, and to revel in roses, instead of having just two or three in a vase."

When Francis returned the following afternoon, he surprised his wife bending over a large box filled with lilacs. "See," she exclaimed, "my desire has come true! I have for once all the flowers I could wish. These came with Lloyd Thompson's card. He has remembered how I loved the great bushes of lilacs which grew in my father's garden."

"I hate lilacs," said Francis slowly, "for your story reeked with them. Every page was impregnated with the odor, which is so associated with your villain that I wonder how you can endure it."

Francis's cold rapidly developed from what had seemed merely an irritation of the throat to an incessant racking cough, accompanied at night by a feverish rise in temperature. Then his life seemed to contract into narrower limits. At first the change was gradual. His office hours grew shorter. Then he went only on alternate days, and did more work at home, then rose later, moving slowly from bedroom into parlor. At last the change was only from bed to chair, with feeble step and labored breathing.

The doctor shook his head, hinting at inherited delicacy of constitution and advising a move to a warmer climate, at least during the treacherous months of early spring. Francis laughed derisively. "Do not be frightened," he said to his wife. "I tell you, I have nothing but a cold. I am sure I should get well at once if I could only see you again at your writing."

Day followed day and night dragged after night, and in some subtle fashion an estrangement grew between the two. As the shadows deepened into which Francis forced his slow and tortuous way, losing his interest in the things of sight, his spiritual perception grew keener, and he awakened to the consciousness that something lay concealed between him and his wife. The spoken

word no longer satisfied his need. He groped behind the symbol for the truth it hid. Often he instinctively shrank from her ministrations, spending brooding hours with dull eyes fastened on her face, as though to penetrate the mask of flesh and surprise her secret self. But Dorothea stood on guard, a weary but valiant soldier, with the ever increasing consciousness that she fought a losing battle.

Quick, then, in panic, she would press her lips to his, to meet no answering thrill; would grasp his damp, limp hand in a futile effort to impart to it her own vitality, then burst into sobs as neither prayers nor tears had power to move him as he lay with closed eyes motionless upon his bed.

The house was very still one night, as Dorothea listened to that labored breathing and rattling cough. The shadows deepened as the night light waned to a feeble spark. The wind tugged at the casement and shook the creaking door. Suddenly a burst of laughter stirred the air—a ghastly mockery of mirth, devoid of gaiety. Springing to her feet, she stood, arrested as by a thunderbolt, as loud the question rang out in the dim-lighted room:

"Why don't you write? Why don't you write?"

She caught the new note in his voice. He had no further need to question, for he knew the answer past all doubt. But, after a momentary pause, she went to him, losing all sight of self in pity for his need, although she knew that now the veil was torn from before her face, and that ashamed she feared the gaze of those accusing eyes.

Then in the night light's sudden flare, she saw her husband rise in his bed, the fever sending a sudden gush of blood pouring through his veins. His cheeks grew red; his dulled eyes gleamed with a hectic glow. His voice rang strong and clear, as once again the cry stunned her ear: "Why don't you write? You liar! You *prostitute!*"

He aimed a savage blow at her, then fell back choking, as a scarlet stream ran from his lips, and Dorothea crouched, wild-eyed and tearless, at his side.

WHEN THE FIELDS WERE WHITE TO THE HARVEST

By Frederick D. Culver

THEY filled it up as a sanitary measure, the old moat with its dank moss-covered stones. The doctors said that the stagnant water bred germs, invisible, sinister messengers of epidemic that rose from the moat, spread over the city and then quietly settled down to work their disastrous tasks. It was no end of trouble to stop an epidemic once it got started among the natives. When the fever gripped them they lay down like sheep and never got up again.

The contractor drained the moat before filling the stone waterway with dirt, but he was careful in leaving a film of filthy water over the accumulation of mire. I fancy he brought sagacity and imagination to his engineering problem, reasoning that a too thorough dredging of the bottom would uncover things that would have to be sorted and carted to the cemetery instead of being dumped indifferently into the sea. His prudence was commendable. There was nothing to be gained by forcing confessions of human frailty from the brackish depths. What a miserable place to lie! Bah! Stagnant water is loathsome. I was gratified when I saw the dirt go in and knew that Señor Manuel Ubilla's body was now completely covered up and out of the way, and that there was no likelihood of anyone ever discovering it.

I used to sit there on the top of the wall where a stone had been broken out and watch them at work. I could sit on the wall if I chose, for I had leisure, plenty of time and an abundance of gold, enough to fill a big chest. They plugged up the subterranean passage

that belched water into the moat at high tide and then started the pumps. The water receded gradually, for the moat was large. It took some time. The days were full of interest. I had a room at the Hotel de France in the walled city, so I was near the work. I sat on the wall daily watching the water fall from crevice to crevice. Others came and sat there, too, the idle and curious, chattering as to what would be found at the bottom of the moat. Their talk amused me; I congratulated myself upon my superior knowledge. I knew what lay at the bottom and why the stone was missing from the wall. They were my inferiors, these common fellows; I had but to lift my hand and they were my slaves. Did I not have gold?

Sometimes, as I sat there, I thought of my people of low estate struggling in far-off England to get bread from the soil. It would have pleased me to send them money and tell them I was well and rich, but one cannot impart as much or as little information as he will. My precipitate departure from London forbade my return. Such a bungler as I was then! No, it were best my people should not know. They might have had the use of the money, but it would not have alleviated the pain the information would bring. What a robber of joy is sentiment! I'm glad I am rid of it.

At my back against the wall was a house, something more than a hut, for it was made of stone, more pretentious than a cell, for it had two rooms. Señor Ubilla used one for a library, the other, the one next the city wall, for a sleeping chamber and vault. The roof was low

and flat; you could reach it from the ground with the aid of a short ladder, and the same ladder placed on the roof made it possible to ascend to the top of the wall. The house boasted a small court, enclosed on the sides by stone walls almost as high as the eaves, and in front by a tall iron picket fence. If it had not been for the porchway across the front of the house, the palm trees and the grass in the court, the passer-by might easily have mistaken the residence of Señor Ubilla for a prison.

I met Señor Ubilla one evening at the Hotel de France. He sat opposite me at table. A small man sparingly built he was, with slender white hands, pale face, thin, sensitive lips. His hair was straight, black streaked with gray, his dark eyes small and gleaming with greed. His linen was spotless, his clothes fine in texture and well tailored. I marked him at once, a Spanish gentleman of means and refinement.

Being an epicurean and dining on the best the house afforded, I could not avoid a contrast between my dinner and his. His repast was distinguished by quantity rather than quality. He ate ravenously like a famished person, gorging himself as if in anticipation of a fast. He interested me. I watched him covertly, seeking a reconciliation between his plain fare and his prosperous appearance. He was making a business of pleasure; he addressed himself to his food, determined—to use a common expression—to get the worth of his money. Good! He had the face of a pleasure-loving man, but spending money was no pleasure to him. I made my conclusion and put it to the test. Noting the bottle of cheap wine beside his plate, I called a waiter and ordered a bottle of champagne. When it was served I filled a glass and extended it across the table.

"Your pardon, señor. I am a stranger in a strange land. Will you not have mercy on me in my loneliness?"

He smiled and clutched the glass with talonlike fingers, slowly, as if to conceal his eagerness. As he raised his eyes I saw the greed liven in them. He sipped the wine with keenest pleasure. That was

characteristic of Ubilla. When you were host and he was guest, his delight was boundless; he was vivacious, witty. But when he had to pay, the shadow of the expenditure darkened his spirit; he was morose, dull-minded, preoccupied with regret over the parting with one of his precious dollars.

I toyed with my cigar until he had finished his dinner and excused himself with a bow. Then I followed him through the streets to the stone house. He stopped before the iron gateway and fumbled with the lock for a moment, and then passed up the narrow court to the darkened house. Presently a light shone through the front windows. No one had been waiting for him; evidently he lived alone.

The next morning I strolled down that way and took more than a casual view of the stone house with its iron fence. It was a fortress in miniature, impregnable without the consent of the owner and the aid of his key to the gate. It struck me that an investigation of the man with the greedy eyes who lived in such unusual quarters would prove interesting.

I went to the public records and searched them for Ubilla's name. He had property listed—the stone house and a large acreage of hemp and cane lands in Pampanga Province. Oh, Ubilla, to eat such a dinner with all that wealth! I made a list of the banks and called on them in turn, discovering, as I expected, that Señor Ubilla had no bank account on either side of the Bridge of Spain. Then I drove back to my hotel in good spirits, for I had accounted for the stone house that looked like a fortress.

I would have staked my fortune—it was pathetically small—that Ubilla would appear at dinner. The habits of a recluse are painfully ordered. I would not have lost. I waited in the lobby until he took his place of the evening before and began scanning the menu card—studying the prices, I noticed. I approached him and placed my hand upon his shoulder.

"Señor," I said, "well met again. It pleases me to play the host, but I have

no home and consequently am unable to offer its hospitality. The public place is a sorry makeshift, both for host and guest, but I must resort to it if I have my pleasure. Will you make it possible for me to gratify my whim? Do me the honor of becoming my guest tonight."

A dinner for nothing, and such a dinner as I would order! His acceptance fairly gushed from his penurious mind—and then the thin lips pressed firmly together. I was afraid of that. He was a gentleman; he knew that he could not proffer one of his dinners in return. From his standpoint it was a losing proposition. He looked up and answered:

"You honor me, señor, but to be the guest of a stranger incurs obligations I am loath to assume."

Bah! Such a speech! But I repressed my disgust with a genial smile. "Oh, have no fear of that. An Englishman is a stranger nowhere, and he does not reckon good fellowship in terms of obligations."

I took the seat opposite him and summoned the waiter. Ubilla spoke again.

"You are an Englishman? From London perhaps?"

"Yes. My business interests there were quite trying—so much so that my physical well-being demanded that I should get away from them, take a long sea voyage. Hence, my presence in Manila."

"You will make some investments here?"

"Later on perhaps I may do something in a financial way, but at present I am an idler, thinking little of business cares, merely seeking good comradeship. I am not one who takes his pleasure alone. I trust my zeal for company does not annoy you."

For an instant the instinctive light of good cheer and friendliness shone in his eyes, and then he became his perverted, miserly self again, the self I had to deal with. Well, I would win it. I would pay the bills. The miser could not withstand that.

I ordered a dinner worthy a magnate. I crammed my guest to repletion, and then drove him to the Luneta to hear the music. When he found that he might be

joyous without expense, he became charming. I liked him. Strange, when my contempt for him was so thorough. When we drove back to his house he could not in decency leave me on the pavement.

The door was small, of heavy, solid wood; the walls thick. The floor under the large rug that wholly covered the living room was solid stone. The walls were hung with tapestries, and swinging iron shutters were fastened to the window casings. I was inside the vault.

Experience is a great teacher if one has wits enough to profit by it. I had learned the folly of plunging headlong; learned that successful and satisfactory results come only through quiet, patient working and waiting, doing everything in order.

My host offered me an indifferent cigar and we talked until a late hour. Shrewdly I brought him to tell me what I already knew of his affairs—of the land he owned in the province. He told me much about the products of the islands, but what interested me most, his land was valuable—more so than I had supposed. I feigned an interest in property. I talked in thousands; I proposed that we go and see his land at my expense.

We did so, and when I saw the rich fields the peace of the virtuous filled my heart. Had I been impatient, unwilling to wait the timely occasion—ah, it was good land, worthy to be transferred to the stone house under the wall.

Your true miser is vulnerable at one point: he glories in the touch of gold. Wealth in the abstract, in lands and bonds, is not satisfying. His unholy passion must be satiated by sight and touch; he must have his hands in his hoard, count it, fondle it and store it away. From day to day I plied Ubilla with entertainment, and he became quite friendly. I was to him a source of income, for every time I wined and dined him added to his store. It was well; I was simply making my opportunity, quietly, patiently, doing everything in order.

When the fields were white we were sitting in his library. He turned to me and asked abruptly:

"Señor, what is your business in London?"

The air of a carefree pleasure-seeker fell from my shoulders like a mantle discarded. My voice was hard and stern.

"Money getting is my business. Not lands nor honor nor position, but money—hard, shining gold that you can touch and feel—gold that glistens in the light." I drew a handful of gold pieces from my pocket and threw them on the table—it was my whole fortune. I fingered it, letting one piece clink upon another.

"This, señor, is the true God, the giver of life. Without money a man is a slave; with it all men are subject to him; he reaches out his hand and takes whom and what he will. Other men weep and wail; calamities fall upon them; but he smiles and goes his way secure. The love he lavishes on his god is requited. He is caressed by ease, luxury and soft linen. Ah, gold is your true religion! Wealth does not make a man a god—wealth in lands, manufacturing plants, business blocks. The merely wealthy man is not secure. Panics come and close his plant; a fire sweeps the city and consumes his offices in an hour; drought and pestilence destroy his lands, making him a slave and a pauper. Gold is the one thing secure. Drought makes it only more valuable; it cannot be burned with fire.

"We have seen your land. It is rich, it is valuable, but it does not insure you, señor. The government of the islands is shifting; values are precarious. Armies have run over the land; who knows when they may do so again? The great Octopus across the Pacific, stretching its tentacles to clutch what it desires, may confiscate the whole land. Nations do not consider individuals. Some morning you may awake to find your whole fortune gone. As long as there is that possibility you are a slave. But to sell"—I clutched at the money—"to have the gold in your hands, that is my policy."

Ubilla was a coward. I saw that I had him on the rack. I stretched the chains tighter.

"The hated Americans are coming here seeking investments. If you know them, you will realize that they get

what they desire. If they want your land and you will not sell, they will pauperize you; they will block your markets, take your labor away from you, undersell you, so that in the end you will be glad to come to their terms. Now is the time to sell."

He leaned forward anxiously, the trenchant lines grim in his niggardly face.

"Señor, you voice my fears. The land has paid good returns, but, as you say, the times are troubled. I would sell if I could get a satisfactory price."

"That should not be impossible. There are a number of commission firms in Manila."

"Yes, robbers. I will not put the business into their hands."

"Then do it yourself, and I will help you."

"And your compensation?"

"Oh, nothing. I shall be glad to serve you. The truth is that pleasure-seeking is becoming irksome to me. The deal must be cash, of course."

"Assuredly."

We were agreed on that point.

The price Señor Ubilla set on his land and the magnitude of the transaction made it difficult to find a buyer. Could I have identified myself with him in a public way, and have taken the initiative, the business might have been dispatched. But I did not care to publish my acquaintance with him nor my interest in the sale of his land. I confined my activities to inserting notices in the newspapers, answering correspondence over his name and the like. He must have found some discrepancy between the offer of my services and the services themselves, but of course he could say nothing.

Finally the deal was made. I did not witness the transference of the deeds and money. It was nothing to me, even if I did see Ubilla come out of the American bank with a large traveling bag in his hand. I was walking on the Escolta at the time. I might have joined him, but I was not one who would rob him of the joy of gloating over his treasure alone, of counting it again and again before laying it away with the hoard.

I went for a walk on the broad wall of the old city to study the moat. Moats are always interesting, this one especially. In some places it was quite deep, so deep that you could scarcely discern the grimy stones and black water in the shadows. Near Ubilla's house I judged it to be forty feet from the top of the wall to the surface of the water.

After a refreshing stroll I drove across the Bridge of Spain, found a Chinese cabinet maker and ordered him to make a light, strong ladder that would fold in sections. I called for it in the afternoon, bought fifty feet of rope and returned to my hotel.

Señor Ubilla met me at dinner. He was in good spirits, lavish in his words of appreciation for my services—but he let me pay for our dinners. I did so with one of the two remaining gold pieces clinking in my pocket. The last one went for the bottles of choice wine and cigars I placed in my empty suitcase and the little packet I purchased at the apothecary's.

When it was quite dark I took the suitcase and the ladder I had left in the courtyard of the hotel and started for Ubilla's. I shoved the ladder through the fence in the shadow, tossed the rope after it and then boldly shook the gate. Ubilla came at once. He was not cautious—I was the only visitor he ever had. I extended the suitcase and told him I had come to make merry over his good fortune. A shadow of annoyance crossed his face. I knew—he had planned to make merry in his own way that night. But he forced some heartiness into his welcome. We entered the house and settled down to an evening of pleasure.

The wine flowed freely; our spirits rose. The lines in the miser's face broke into smiles over my jests and stories. He leaned back in his chair and laughed. I had him completely off his guard. Under the cover of the table I dusted the contents of the packet into my glass, then reached for his and filled them both to the brim.

"Come, señor, I propose a toast. Let us drink to the god who lets us live, the God of Gold."

He took the glass I offered him—I was careful to make no mistake. We drank the toast to the dregs, and lit fresh cigars. Then I leaned back in my chair and shot a rapid fire of anecdote across the table to my host, who left me all the bills to pay. But he would pay now; the scales were turning. His eyes grew dull; his head sank to his breast. He aroused himself with an effort, started to rise, but fell back again limp and weary. His eyes closed. Señor Manuel Ubilla was asleep; the vault was left unguarded.

I drew his bunch of keys from his pocket, took the lamp and passed into the sleeping chamber. I crossed to the back wall, dropped to my knees and brushed the tapestries aside. The loosened panel of stone was not hard to find. The iron chest behind it moved easily, for it was mounted on rollers. I fitted a key in the lock and raised the lid. It was almost full. On top, neatly arranged, were piles of banknotes, many packets of them, of large denomination. I filled Ubilla's traveling bag with them. Then I came to some canvas bags, small but heavy, a score of them enough to fill my suitcase. Then the chest was empty. It should have been. It contained a goodly fortune for five men. Shame on Ubilla, keeping so much money out of circulation! He was a menace to society.

I rolled the chest back, set the panel into place and carried my grips to the front porch. I did not become panic-stricken. Ah, I had learned that all must be done quietly and in order; that a man must have his wits about him.

I took a survey of the street, placed my ladder against the house and tossed the rope to the top of the wall. Then I put the room in order, placed the wine and glasses in a cupboard, blew out the light and gathered my miserly friend in my arms. Fortunate that he was lean and small! It is no easy task to ascend a ladder with a sleeping man hanging from one's shoulder.

When I had gained the top of the wall, I sank to my hands and knees and half dragged, half rolled my parsimonious

host to the edge of the moat. I loosened a stone, tied it to the end of the rope, slipped a noose under Ubilla's armpits and shoved his legs over the edge. Then, bracing my feet in a crevice, I let out the rope hand over hand. My estimate was almost exact. When the weight eased on my arms, five feet of rope lay on the wall beside me. I thought I heard a cry. I let out the rest of the rope and leaned over the edge, but only a faint bubbling sound came up, not enough to notice. I flung the rope into the moat and quickly wiggled to the ladder and to the ground.

The ladder I pulled to pieces and flung the sections over the side wall, where they will lie until they rot, as will the bones of Ubilla the miser, in the moat, since they have filled it with dirt.

The next morning I sailed for Hong Kong. The papers stated that one Señor Ubilla, having recently sold his holdings in Pampanga Province, had left for Hong Kong that day. His name was on the passenger list of the steamer. When I returned to Manila he was not at home. No one knew when he would return, and no one cared. That was fortunate.



LATER

By Willard Huntington Wright

I WENT to the place where my youth took birth
 In the slow, round kiss of an amorous girl,
 When sonnets and lace were the measure of earth
 When death was forgotten and life was a whirl.

I addled my brain with the memories flown
 Of Heatherby Kaiser and Muriel Moore;
 I thought of the women and men I had known,—
 The glittering eyes and the bolt on the door—

The warm, gray walls and the odor of musk,
 The wine, the piano, the glistening feet,
 The eyes grown hazy like shadows at dusk,
 The minstreling music that rose from the street.

I thought of Elise with her soft, gold hair;
 And the buttonhook hung from the chandelier.
 The spirit of passionate youth had been there—
 But somehow the dream of it wasn't quite clear,

For the place had been altered; the walls were red,
 And the woodwork was stained with a desolate brown;
 And they told me a woman had lain in the bed
 For a year and a half with the curtains down.



GIRLS' boarding school—an institution of yearning.

ROUNDING THE TRIANGLE*

By David Quarella

CHARACTERS

HE
HIS MISTRESS
HIS BETROTHED

PLACE: *Any large city.*

TIME: *The present.*

SCENE—*His flat. It is on the first floor of a "Mansion."* There is a telephone extension from the porter's lodge. There are the usual accessories of a bachelor flat, including some passable engravings and, over the mantelpiece, a large photograph of a good-looking young woman of about twenty-six years of age. There are no other photographs of women. A low stone curb fender shows signs of having been habitually stood upon. HE is discovered walking up and down nervously and with impatience. He is a man of thirty-two or so, clean-shaven, legal-looking; a man of the world. He is obviously worried. This is not unnatural, as he has a nasty piece of business to do, and wants to get it over. He paces about, fiddles with the pipes and other articles on the mantelpiece and mutters softly to himself. At length he speaks.

HE (with exasperation)

Oh, hang it all, why can't she come and let me get it over? (He goes up to the mantelpiece, and putting his elbows on it gazes hypnotically into the eyes of the young woman's photograph. At length he turns away, with clenched hands, and swears softly to himself.) Beast—beast; and now still more a beast. (He resumes his zoo-like pacings, which are forthwith interrupted by the ring of the telephone. He dashes to the instrument, snatches off the receiver and listens.) Yes—yes (With nervous irritation)—yes, I'm here; ask her to come up. (He instinctively gives his coat a little pull to settle it better on him, passes a hand over his hair as he looks into the glass hanging on the wall, and with a small sigh of resignation arranges himself near the fire to receive his visitor.

She does not keep him waiting more than a minute. There is a knock at the door.)

HE

Come in. (His MISTRESS enters. She is a radiant, full-blooded, handsome girl of twenty-one. She looks less like a servant and more like a mistress than most of her class. She shows every sign of being well cared for, and is at the moment evidently exhilarated with joy. There is no pause when she comes in; she almost runs up to him and, forgetting to close the door, throws her arms round his neck, bursting into a happy little laugh.)

HIS MISTRESS

Oh, Jack, Jack, you little pig—how could you leave me for so long? It's a week—a whole week—and never a sight or sound of you! My word! I'll pun-

ish you. What's been the matter? I know—you'll say "work"! Bother your old work—and it can't take you days and nights—and you haven't been away, because they told me you hadn't been when I rang up—and oh, Jack, darling (A hug), I have wanted you so much! Haven't you wanted me?

HE (*uncomfortably*)
Shut the door—(*With an effort*)—dear.

HIS MISTRESS (*laughing*)
Oh—is that all you have to say—“Shut the door (*Mimicking him*)—dear”? (*She turns to shut the door.*) Now what is the matter? You're overworking—that's what it is. I know; you always get all fussy and cross when you over-work. It's your liver. But you'll be all right soon; all you want is a little of me, and then—Jack, you know you want me—don't you? We're going away for the week-end—that's what you've got me here to tell me—isn't it? (*She puts her hands on his shoulders and looks provocatively up at him as he stands stiffly on the fender. He is nervously playing with his watchchain, and trying to make up his mind to say something. He looks at her, half curiously, half fearfully.*)

HE
No—it—wasn't—that. (*He finds some difficulty in shaping his sentences.*) No—I wanted to talk to you—about something. (*He stops, to frame what he has to say, but he is so long about it that she breaks in—now just a little upset herself.*)

HIS MISTRESS

Well, darling, go on—let's have a talk; I'm listening. But (*Pouting*) I do think you might kiss me—properly, after we haven't seen each other for a week.

(*This settles it; it gives him his opening: with desperation he seizes it.*)

HE (*staccato*)

No, Doll, I can't. I can't—kiss you. And that's what I want to say—to explain.

(*Alarm has come into her face. She realizes that things are serious. Her eyes remain fixed on his as he looks down, not*

on her, but on the carpet at her feet. Then she sees the photograph behind him. She looks at it; then at him. She is still standing. Something like despair is in her eyes, and in her voice, when she speaks again.)

HIS MISTRESS (*after a silence*)
Oh—oh—I see—I know! You needn't—(*She cannot go on.*)

HE (*ashamed, disingenuous, gaining time*)
You see—what?

HIS MISTRESS (*at first restraining herself*)

I see—everything. (*Pointing to the photograph*) That—since last week—since I saw you. (*Then in a passion of wild despair*) Oh—I see; I know it all. I knew it would come—I knew it must come. I knew things couldn't go on forever. I knew you'd get tired of me—tired; or even if you didn't—you would have to settle down—be respectable; and I'd have to go. I know it's all right; I'm not respectable, even if I am just only yours, now. You've got to—oh, how often I've said to myself you'd have to—but now it's come—Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! (*She breaks down quite; sinks into the easy chair, and covers her face in her hands. She cries silently, with little chokings; not, as most of her class, like a blubbering baby.*)

He endeavors, with some natural difficulty, to assume the air of a tolerably fond parent, and, stooping down, gently raises her till she is in his arms, her head, still in her hands, resting on his shoulders.)

HE (*with an effort at judicial calmness, but not unaffected, and suffering as much from shame as from a genuine feeling of unhappiness*)

There, there, Doll; it isn't so bad. I feel an awful beast—and I'm awfully fond of you; but—you know—as you said—

HIS MISTRESS (*interrupting him and breaking loose fiercely; standing over against him with shining eyes*)

Yes, I know—it's all as I said—it's always the way. We women must go when we've done what's wanted of us.

You men take what we can give as long as you like; and when you don't like—well, we have to try somewhere else. You may love—or think you love; but love doesn't last—not that kind; and we've no way to compel you—so—we go.

HE (*distressed*)

Doll—Doll, darling—

HIS MISTRESS (*ruthlessly*)

No—don't pretend; you don't love me—it's gone. If you did, this wouldn't have come. I didn't ask to be married; I wanted you to be free. Even if you'd asked me to marry you, I wouldn't have—and you did ask me—once! I loved you too much. And now things have proved themselves, just as they would prove themselves in ordinary marriages if people were free as we are. You're going on—to somebody else—because you love her. And you did love me—(*She turns away, rests her arms on the mantelpiece and buries her face in them.*) Jack—(*In muffled tones*)—you loved me; you took me—out of the street—where I'll go again—

HE (*interrupting violently*)

No—no—I swear you sha'n't! That'll be all right. I'll make arrangements—you sha'n't ever have to do that again—do you hear?

HIS MISTRESS

I don't want it. I don't want money. I want you. And what does it matter what I do if I haven't got you? (*Wearily*) What do you think I shall do when I don't see you? It's been bad enough for this week—and you expect me to live a whole life like that? What'll I do? You know I can't do much. You've been pretty well everything to me. And one can't live just doing nothing—and wanting— No; I'll have to do something, and what else can I do—except—what I did? Oh—darling—what have I got to live for? (*She sinks back into the chair, this time to lie with her face pressed to its cushions, and her hand hanging nervelessly over its back.*)

HE (*a little hoarsely*)

Doll—you make me feel so bad. But—you shall be taken care of, and you'll find lots to do. If you like I'll find you a little shop somewhere. And then, you know you'll soon forget about me, and—there'll be (*He doesn't like saying it.*)—someone else—(*He hesitates for a word, and then adds*)—respectable.

HIS MISTRESS (*turning round and raising herself, a little scornfully*)

Oh, yes; I know you'd do the "right thing"! Pension me off—for faithful service! Or start me in a shop! What should I do in a shop? There's only one thing I've learned to sell, and that's myself. And I shall sell it again. Do you think one can just turn round and do nothing—vegetate—when one likes? You haven't given me a good training for that: theaters—gaiety—wine—love—all the glow and glamour of life—and then, just in a moment—a shop! (*She gives a hard little laugh.*)

HE (*uncertainly*)

I hadn't thought—I didn't know—

HIS MISTRESS (*passionately*)

Know? You know—you must know. When you took me from the street, did you set about training me for a shop? When you gave me anything I wanted, were you training me for a shop? When you kissed and caressed me, and made me know all the mad joys of life, were you fitting me for a shop? When you made me love beautiful things—when you educated me for five years—when you brought me to something like your own level—were you doing it all to help me serve in a shop? No—I sha'n't do that. I couldn't. I wouldn't. I'll still have the things I'm used to. I can. I will. And if I can't have them from you—well (*Bitterly*)—I'll have to have them from someone else. (*She tries to be hard and defiant, but fails, and, instead, falls back again in the chair, sobbing.* Then, amid her sobs) Oh, Jack—Jack—how can I say it—but—it's true—darling—you know it!

(*He has been horrified by this outburst. He had thought—when he thought about it*

THE SMART SET

at all—that she would somehow settle down, like an old age pensioner, into a secluded and eminently respectable life, ending up, probably, with a middle class man and marriage. So the obvious way in which it strikes her comes upon him as a moral shock. He is, after all, a human being and not a brute, and the real essentials of morality, as distinguished from surface sexual conventions, do stir him. He still loves his mistress in quite a sincere way—he has helped her out of the mire; she is something of his handiwork—and the prospect of the structure he has built up being torn down and desecrated affects him powerfully. Thoughts such as these have been tearing through his mind as she speaks, and after she has stopped he stands for quite a minute looking at her slender body as it lies there on the chair, face buried, shaken with silent sobs. Then he takes a mighty resolution, clenches his hands, swings round, steps off the curb fender, and as he strides across the room speaks.)

HE

No, damn it, you sha'n't! You can't; I won't let you. It's true—I *have* made you. You were a little girl in the gutter, and I dragged you out of it. And all because I loved you; because I wanted to do you good and help you; because of the God in me. And as you grew and developed I found more in you to feed my love and less to fire my passion. Perhaps that's why I can think of leaving you now. Perhaps you are right, and all married people become friends rather than lovers, and a man wants a new mistress when his wife has ceased to be one.

I never thought of you going back; I never thought you could. I thought, somehow, you had gone past it all. But it's quite right—quite right. If I have my new love—am I to deny you yours? If I have my new life, am I to deny you yours? No—if I go, you go. It is not only the laws of man; it's the everlasting law of Nature that decrees it. Man may say: "You shall not be friends of each other," but Nature says: "You cannot help being lovers of someone else."

(She has raised her head and is looking at him. As she nods silently he goes on.)

I had not seen all this quite clearly before. I thought of you going on without me, much the same as you went on when I was there—even though conditions prevented my ever seeing you; for I had made up my mind to play the game—you were to go *out of my life*. (She shudders and hides her face.) But you sha'n't. (She keeps her face hidden. He bends over her and takes her hand.) Do you hear—you sha'n't; I am going to stick to you. I won't leave you.

HIS MISTRESS (*still keeping her face hidden and murmuring miserably*)

No—you must go. You can't change it now. You love her. You'd do it out of pity for me. But you sha'n't do it. (*Uncovering her face and turning it to his.*) My dear, I knew it would come. You don't suppose I've been such a fool as not ever to think! Sometimes—just sometimes—I dreamed that I could climb up to you and be with you. That was when I worked—and tried to speak right—and spell right—and not laugh loudly—and eat properly.

HE (*breaking in*)
And you can—you do—

HIS MISTRESS (*gently*)

Yes, dear; I can—I do—pretty well—for me. Maybe people wouldn't notice. I dreamed all that. But—I always woke up. You couldn't—you know you couldn't. I can't explain. You know. It would mean—

HE (*impetuously*)

It would mean that a few miserable scoundalmongers would talk, and a few worthless society puppets would go. But—good Lord, hasn't a man got his happiness founded deeper than froth? Don't affection, ideals, the realities of existence count at all? And money—I'm not a foolish, moonstruck boy, prating about "love in a cottage." I've got money—we can get the things we want; even if people kept away at first, they would come back. And we don't want them—and we could fight. We are right, you know—right! We are the

idealists, and we could prevail. I know it.

HIS MISTRESS (who, during his appeal, has drawn herself up and has something of her old buoyancy, still uncertainly) And she? (Pointing to the photograph) And your ideal of her? What of that?

HE (determined not to lose his glimpse of a great ideal)

I shall tell her everything. She must know; I see now she ought to. I can never marry her. She must go out of my life—from this moment. (He goes up to the photograph and turns it so that it hangs face to the wall.) This is right; this is the true ideal; I feel it now—I know it. She would be much to me; but she would not be *this*: and she would be something wrong. How could we be happy—with you— (He breaks off.)

HIS MISTRESS (haltingly)

And—if we—how would you—what would you—

HE

I would tell her just what has happened—every word. (She hides her face. He bends down to comfort her.) Doll—darling—don't be ashamed. I am not ashamed—I am proud of you—I should always be proud of you—you will be mine before all the world—couldn't you be a little proud?

HIS MISTRESS (shuddering a little in his arms)

Darling, I could never face her—never think of her; and oh, you mustn't!

HE (quickly)

She will not blame—she will say I was right. We do care for one another—at least, she has cared for me up to now. But she must know. She is splendid—she will help us to do right. And it is not too late; no one knows—except you. Oh, Doll, don't be afraid; I love you, more fiercely than ever I could love her. They call it the wrong love; they say it is mere passion, lust. But it is the root of everything, and without it love is nothing. It is *that* love that weaves bonds

and breeds duties. I see it all now. (Kissing her passionately) I see it all now. And she—she will see it, too. (The telephone bell rings. He starts, and pulls out his watch.) Good heavens! Already! (He jumps up, extricating himself from the girl, and stands for a moment irresolutely. Then he comes to a sudden determination, and, walking up to the instrument, takes off the receiver.) It may as well be now. (He speaks into the telephone.) Yes. . . . Ask her to speak to me, please. (A moment's pause; then) Oh, is that you? . . . Yes. . . . No, I can't come quite this moment; I've a little tea party here, and we're just finishing. Come up and join us, will you? . . . Do. You can tell the motor to wait, and—and—we'll go on in a few minutes. . . . No. I won't be long. (He puts back the receiver with a crash, and turns round to face the girl, who has started, terrified, out of the chair.)

HIS MISTRESS (fearfully)

What is it? Who is it? Let me go!

HE (with the air of a man who is cruel only to be kind, and who is, himself, rather frightened at his own action)

It's she. It's better to get it over at once. You mustn't go. We'll go through it together.

HIS MISTRESS (in wild alarm)

Oh, no—no—no! I must go. Let me go—quick! (She starts toward the door.)

HE (staying her by the arm)

Stop, Doll. You can't. You'll meet her coming up. Believe me, darling, it's for the best.

HIS MISTRESS (turning in agony)

Oh, how can you? (She dashes toward the door into the bedroom.) Let me go in there. (But he is nearer the door, and, getting between her and it, prevents her entering, turns the key, and takes it out.) No, no, Doll. I won't have you found hiding—this isn't a French farce. She has got to know now—she will know, must know, as soon as she comes in. (Indicating the bare table) There's no

tea party. There's only you. And she is going to know you. We are going to begin things right from now.

HIS MISTRESS (*incapable of any other utterance, and throwing herself into a chair, her arms stretched at length across the table, her face buried*)

Oh! (*She remains in this semi-prone position as if stunned by fear and shame. Immediately there comes a knock at the door.*)

HE (*firmly*)

Come in.

(*The door opens and HIS BETROTHED enters. She is a handsome clear-faced woman of about twenty-six. Her manner is cool and self-possessed, and, after a momentary start, she betrays no agitation at the somewhat unexpected scene which confronts her. He is standing, in an attitude suggestive of mingled embarrassment and defiance, before the bedroom door. The other woman still half lies over the table. For a moment there is nothing said or done. Then the girl who has entered carefully closes the door, and turning to the man, speaks in an almost conventional tone.*)

HIS BETROTHED

Will you introduce me to this young lady? (*Indicating the girl, who never looks up*)

HE (*a little taken aback at what he considers something of an anti-climax, but determined to proceed as rapidly and resolutely as possible with the drama which has to be enacted*)

I will tell you all about her. That is why I asked you to come up—and told you a lie about a tea party.

HIS BETROTHED

I gathered that when I saw you both. (*Then pleasantly*) But mayn't we sit down? Perhaps it may take some time.

HE (*with rapid apology, going to an easy chair and moving it up a little*)

Oh, do—please. But I'll stand up if you don't mind. (*He goes to the fireplace.*)

HIS BETROTHED (*settling herself*)

Yes, dear; you always do think better standing up. (*She prepares to listen, looking, however, at the girl at the table, who has not moved.*)

HE (*standing with his back to the fireplace, and keeping his eyes on the girl, who still lies as if unconscious*)

Marion, this is Miss Dorothy Grove; and I—we—have come to the conclusion that you ought to know all about our relations. They began about four years ago when I first met her—it doesn't matter how. (*HIS BETROTHED nods.*) It is enough to say that at that time she was—she had just begun to—to—

HIS BETROTHED (*helping him out*)

Yes—I know.

HE (*continuing with relief*)

And I—that is, we found we cared more for each other—than is usual; and so we—we entered into—arrangements—

HIS BETROTHED (*again coming to the rescue, definitely*)

You made her your mistress.

HE

Yes.

HIS BETROTHED

I think that was the best thing you could have done, my dear. If you men must do that—and you do, it seems—it is far better that it should be in that way. It is better for the girl, too, because she gets at all events a position which lasts for some time, and may lead to her being set up somehow, afterward—at all events, not left quite so much at the mercy of chance and age.

HE (*rather staggered*)

But—

HIS BETROTHED (*taking the conversation into her own hands*)

Oh, yes, I know. You will say I'm shockingly unideal and perhaps immoral. But I'm not. What I'm saying is only common sense mixed with a desire for the best; and if that isn't moral—and

ideal—I don't know what is. I wish men could be satisfied with conventional marriage. They might if society and economics permitted the solution at the time it set the puzzle. But it doesn't. Some day perhaps it will. Till then we've got to make the best of a difficult position and not make it worse by hypocrisy. I wish all men did as you did, who did anything. Why don't they? Is it desire for variety or—(She pauses.)

HE (*trying to fill in the pause*)
It's—very often—(He hesitates.)

HIS BETROTHED

Money. Or convenience. But mostly money, I think. Yes, it's mostly money—like marriage. We women generally sell ourselves one way or another. And all I want to be sure of as a woman is that on the whole women can make a good bargain—that they get their fortune, or their titles, or their children, or their happiness, or whatever they exchanged their bodies and independence for. (*Looking across at His MISTRESS, not unkindly*) I think this young woman has not been wronged by you. (*She goes over and leans on the opposite side of the table.*) Won't you speak to me?

HIS MISTRESS (*lifting her face suddenly*)
I hate you! (*She straightens herself and glowers.*)

HIS BETROTHED (*softly*)
Yes; you would, my dear. (*Turning to him*) I don't blame you, John.

HIS MISTRESS (*half hysterically*)
I—I won't be talked of—just as if I were—a—an animal!

HIS BETROTHED (*quietly*)
But you are an animal, my dear—we all are; and you have chosen to be a professional animal.

HE (*shocked and angry*)
Marion! (*Going round to His MISTRESS and standing above her, his arm round her neck; at last brought to the pitch of avowal*) I should have thought that the fact that this girl had been dear to

me would have protected her from insults. Since it has not, let me tell you that I asked you here now to tell you that I have decided that I am in honor bound to make her my wife, and that I desire to do so. I love her; I have obligations to her; and I must marry her and not you. So please treat her as—as she should be treated. (*He bends down to kiss His MISTRESS's hair, and waits with considerable fortitude for the storm to break. The storm, however, does not break.*)

HIS BETROTHED (*who remains standing and looking at them calmly*)

Well—of course that is one way out. But have you considered exactly what it means?

HE (*after remaining paralyzed for a moment; raising his head and drawing himself up; majestically*)
I have.

HIS BETROTHED (*to His MISTRESS*)
Have you?

HIS MISTRESS (*breaking down*)
Oh—I've told him. He mustn't. He can't. It would ruin him. Oh, I am so miserable! (*She again buries her head in her outstretched arms.*)

HIS BETROTHED
You are a brave girl. And you are right. But I do not think you need be miserable. Let us try to work it out. What is it you want? What is it you are losing—if—he marries—someone else? It won't mean poverty?

HIS MISTRESS (*with sobs*)
No—no; he is good—generous. But it will mean losing him. It will mean—I shall—go back—go down again. He has made me everything good I am; I can't do without him; I couldn't—keep up. (*She breaks down.*)

HIS BETROTHED
Then—I think—you must have him.

HIS MISTRESS (*passionately*)
No—no—I won't—I won't ruin his

life—I won't drag *him* down! I love him. And I know just what it would mean. He couldn't marry me.

HIS BETROTHED

Yes, you are right; you couldn't marry him—unless he were willing to give up his whole career. And I don't think he should do that. But (*Tenderly*), my dear, there's your life, too. I believe what you say is true. If he were taken away, you would fall. And do you think *I* could be happy—then? Suppose—suppose—we both have him?

HE (*stupefied*)

Marion! How can you? What are you talking about? You are quite mad! (*Solidly*) I think you mistake me; I meant what I said; I—we—thought it out. She has educated herself, and in time—it will be all right.

HIS BETROTHED

No, it won't. But even if it were—John, are you the sort of man who could be faithful to one woman?

HE (*hurt and shocked*)

I hope so.

HIS BETROTHED (*pressing him further*)

But do you think so? Have you been—even since—this?

HE (*uncomfortably*)

But—but—this was different. Of course when a man marries—

HIS BETROTHED (*to His MISTRESS*)

Tell me—were not some of your—your friends—married men? Tell me.

HIS MISTRESS (*at last*)

Yes.

HIS BETROTHED

Of course. It's a matter of nature—and of taste. Thank goodness, our class can generally confine itself to itself; upper class morality provides safety valves denied to the middle classes. But, John, you will never be attracted by only one woman. I doubt if two will be enough. You are strong, and have a

lot of animal magnetism. You are in that large category of men who have the choice between a life in an unhappy home, with a woman who cannot be everything herself and will not let anyone else be anything, and a life in a happy home, with a woman of sense and tolerance, who realizes that if she doesn't insist on exclusive possession she will much more nearly attain it than if she does. There are women who need that treatment just as much as men. No doubt if the right people always paired, things would be easier—although even then I doubt if nature's demand for variety would stop. But as long as marriages are made before we have met half the people we are going to, there will either have to be a good deal of give and take or a good many unhappy homes. I think you are one of those who will need—well, tolerance; and I see no reason why, if that's so, you should do either an injustice to this girl or an injury to yourself. After all, there is no reason why she should not do as well in this way as if she were somebody else's wife—the wife of someone she cared nothing for.

HE (*unable to control himself any longer, and thoroughly outraged*)

Marion, I did not think you could say such things! I didn't think you had so little idealism—that you could be so callous! Do you really understand what you are suggesting—that you should share me with another woman? I—I wonder if you know what love is? A pretty sort, this seems to be—of yours—that can—

HIS BETROTHED (*stopping the outburst*)

John, if you weren't pathetic, you would be ridiculous. If you had a sense of humor you would see it; but—

HE (*violently*)

Humor! You talk of humor! Now!

HIS BETROTHED

This seems to be a situation when a sense of humor is acutely needed. Now, look here, do let me put it to you plainly—to you, as you are fond of saying, as a

reasonable man. You at this moment are partly shocked and partly offended.

HE (*protesting*)

Shocked? Offended?

HIS BETROTHED

Yes, shocked to find I am not an ignorant or hypocritical nincompoop; and offended because I can contemplate the prospect of sharing a man, whom I should some time have to share with somebody, with a woman who has already possessed him.

HE

Marion! (*He is pacing up and down the room.*)

HIS BETROTHED

It's true. You know it is. Also, I have refused to assist in a very fine dramatic situation you had nerved yourself for. You were to renounce love, renounce the material benefits of society—temporarily; and, incidentally, renounce me.

HE (*angrily*)

You know—

HIS BETROTHED

Oh, yes, I know you imagined you were making great sacrifices—the situation wouldn't have been really—dramatic—if you hadn't. And, to do you justice, your heart is all right. It's your head that failed. You had not thought it out properly. You were living in a dream of romantic chivalry, instead of the world of today. And just because I have thought it out, because I refuse to let a mixture of pigheadedness and prejudice blind me to the facts of the situation, you are outraged and angry. Because I point out, what your own reason tells you, that marriage with this girl would ruin your career, you are indignant. Because I tell you what anyone who knew you would—that you will never be content with one woman—you are hurt. Because I suggest the obvious way out: that you should still marry me, who can make you quite happy and who will not be under any illusions as to your-

self—while at the same time you should continue to help and please this girl who loves you and has been much to you—you are scandalized. No doubt I have disappointed you. I should have been shocked; I should have been broken-hearted; I should have wept—implored; I should have been the model of a nice-minded girl who loved you in a pure way, and was properly ignorant—or pretended to be—of you and the world. But I happen to be a broad-minded woman who loves you in a perfectly real and sincere way, and who knows both you and the world. I want you well, because I happen to feel a real love for you, and because I believe you are capable of doing big things—

HE (*somewhat soothed, deprecatingly*)
Marion!

HIS BETROTHED

Under proper guidance, I mean. You want development—exploitation; and the prospect of having a man of talent to develop and exploit lends a zest to the other feelings I have for you. Most people would not tell you all this. I am pretty frank—because I believe frankness generally pays, and because it is as well for you to realize the facts of the case, as regards not only yourself but also myself and this girl here. (*She lays her hand on His MISTRESS's shoulder. The girl starts to her feet, throwing off the hand.*)

HIS MISTRESS (*passionately*)
I will never share him—with anyone!

HIS BETROTHED

Then you would rather lose him—altogether?

HIS MISTRESS

I—oh, I want him to myself! (*She looks toward him; but he is leaning on the mantelpiece, his head buried in his crossed arms.*)

HIS BETROTHED (*kindly*)

But if you got him—to yourself—you—wouldn't keep him. We none of us should. You—you haven't, even now.

THE SMART SET

HIS MISTRESS (*subsiding, in misery*)

No—it's true. But as long as no one was—was more to him—it didn't matter. He's been so much—so much!

HIS BETROTHED

Yes. Of course he's been a great deal. And he can still be a great deal. Think: he saw you only—some days. He was not always with you. That, perhaps, was the secret of it. Many marriages which fail might be successes if the husband and wife saw each other only some days. Believe me, it is his wife who will have the most difficult part—aye, and the least happy, I've no doubt. But I'm not blind; I go in with my eyes open—loving him—and knowing that I can help him if I marry him; while you—could only ruin him.

HIS MISTRESS (*wretchedly*)

Yes—it's true. But, oh, it's hard.

HIS BETROTHED (*putting her hand on hers*)

No, dear—not so hard as you think. You will be—not much less—than you are now. You won't be—pensioned; it will all go on, your—education—and everything else. And I shall want to be your friend, as long as you love him and can make him happy.

HIS MISTRESS (*putting her other hand over HIS BETROTHED's, which clasps hers; looking straight into her face*)

You are very wonderful—and very wise.

HE (*suddenly turning round*)

Oh, what a beast I am!

HIS BETROTHED.

No; you're not a beast, and you've not been a beast—not more than most

of us. You have been reckless, but one's not wholly responsible for that. And I dare say you were brought up all wrong—what they call "the education of a gentleman." But you are generous and high-minded—and some day the world will find out that to love too much is better, with all its faults, than to love too little. More kindness, and less cant—that's what's wanted.

HE

Marion—you make too many allowances.

HIS BETROTHED (*gently*)

You can never make too many allowances—if you love a person.

HE (*despondently*)

Oh, my dear, my dear, it's all so confusing—and so hopeless!

HIS BETROTHED

No, it's not; not if you face the facts, and think clearly. Nothing is ever confusing or hopeless if you do that. It's ignorance and prejudice, not sin and vice, that make all the confusion and all the hopelessness in the world. (*Turning to His MISTRESS*) But now, dear, I want to take you along and get to know you better. Come, we will go to my flat and have tea. You see (*With a little laugh*), there wasn't any tea here, after all. I was invited on false pretenses. (*As His MISTRESS looks helplessly to him*) Oh, yes; you shall see him again quite soon. But he has got to know you—and I have got to know you. Come. (*She gently urges her to the door. As they pass through it, she turns back and smiles at him as he still stands at the fireplace in solemn thought.*) Good-bye—think it over. You'll find I'm right, dear.

(*The door closes. There is silence.*)

CURTAIN.



THE apple is the fruit of all evil.]

JEANNE MOISSERON

Par Henri Datin

TOYT vrai Saint-Hilaire a visité, au moins une fois dans sa vie, le château aux tourelles pointues perdu dans la verdure, au fond des prairies de la Lande, un peu au-delà du Galvaire et non loin de la route de Saint-James; mais peu de personnes connaissent, du moins dans ses détails, le drame qui s'y est déroulé, il y a aujourd'hui cent ans.

Propriété de la noble famille de la Champagne, le castel était habité, à la fin du siècle dernier, par le baron Ange de la Champagne, dont un village voisin porte encore de nos jours le prénom.

Excellent homme, serviable, bon à ses tenanciers, le baron Ange de la Champagne, à l'exemple de M. du Bourgblanc, marquis d'Apperville, seigneur de Saint-Hilaire, avait su gagner l'estime de nos compatriotes et en était généralement aimé. Par contre, chacun détestait fort son intendant, André Gohin.

Orgueilleux et vantard, dur au pauvre monde, cette espèce de maître Jacques se croyait tout permis et, volontiers, se fâta arrogé les anciens droits du seigneur. Terreur des paysans, le sachant vindicatif et capable de les desservir, ils courbaient la tête devant lui, mais, en arrière, ne se gênaient pas pour le larder de brocards, les femmes surtout, dont il ne ménageait guère la modestie et la pudeur.

Dans les voisinages du château, un des fermiers du baron, Jacques Moisseron, avait une fille dont la réputation de beauté s'étendait au loin dans la contrée. De taille moyenne, les cheveux châtain-clair, avec ses yeux rieurs, sa bouche d'enfant et ses lèvres rouges, appétissantes comme une cerise mûre, Jeanne était réellement ravissante.

A maintes reprises, suivant son habi-

tude constante, André Gohin avait débité des fadeurs, essayé de lui serrer la taille et de lui dérober un baiser; mais, devant la fière attitude de la jeune fille, il s'arrêta net, non qu'il renonçât à ses projets séduiteurs, dans l'attente seulement d'une occasion favorable.

Un soir, la trouvant seule à la ferme, jugeant le moment propice et se croyant sûr du succès, il devint plus entreprenant; mais Jeanne, d'un ton sec et n'admettant pas la réplique:

—Cessez, je vous prie, ces familiarités; offensantes pour moi, je ne saurais les supporter.

Feignant un profond étonnement, d'une voix où perçaient le repentir et la tristesse:

—Vous m'avez mal compris, Jeanne, et mes intentions sont pures . . . Je vous aime depuis longtemps, vous le savez, et avant de demander votre main à Jacques Moisseron, je voulais m'assurer de votre consentement.

—Epargnez-moi cette démarche inutile auprès de mon père, car je ne suis plus libre.

—Comment cela?

—Je me suis fiancée à mon cousin Félix Gobé.

Un éclair de haine brilla dans les yeux de Gohin; ses noirs sourcils se contractèrent et, les lèvres minces, serrées par le dépit, il s'écria:

—Vous ne l'épouserez pas! . . . M'entendez-vous? . . . vous ne l'épouserez pas . . .

—Et qui m'en empêcherait?

—Moi!

Un franc éclat de rire de la jeune fille accueillit cette boutade; mais, à partir de ce jour, Jeanne compta un implacable ennemi.

Les événements se précipitaient et la tourmente révolutionnaire menaçait d'anéantir le vieux monde. La famille royale arrêtée à Varennes, Louis XVI avait été ramené à Paris et l'on parlait de le mettre en jugement. Ne se croyant plus en sûreté, le baron Ange de la Champsagne, comme les autres membres de la noblesse du pays, passa à Jersey, et delà gagna l'Angleterre.

André Gohin l'accompagna dans sa fuite, mais s'arrêta à la côte. Son maître embarqué, il s'en alla rejoindre les compagnies des réfractaires, alors en formation, sous le commandement du marquis Dubois-Guy. Bientôt nombreuses, ces bandes devinrent la terreur de la contrée, et, à diverses reprises, non sans succès, échangèrent le coup de feu avec les colonnes mobiles républicaines.

Beau gars de 25 ans, l'air franc et ouvert, Félix Gobé aimait sa cousine Jeanne de toute son âme. Avec confiance, le père Moisseron lui donnait sa fille, le sachant laborieux et économique, et comme don de joyeux avènement, devait lui céder son exploitation quelques jours après ses noces, aux environs du 29 septembre. Tout respirait donc la joie dans les deux familles et, pour chacun, l'avenir se montrait tranquille.

Le fiancé de Jeanne demeurait au hameau de la Coderie, dans la maison de son père, sise au bord du chemin conduisant au moulin de Termont, où chacun peut la voir encore aujourd'hui.

Un soir, vers onze heures, par une nuit noire, les Gobé entendirent frapper à leur porte.

—Ami, répondit la voix qui ajouta: Félix, sors une minute, j'ai un mot à te dire, et un petit service à te réclamer.

—Je suis à toi à l'instant, répliqua celui-ci, qui croyait reconnaître un voisin.

A peine dans la cour, sans lui laisser le temps de prononcer une parole, notre homme est baillonné, saisi à bras-le-corps et entraîné de force dans le chemin creux.

Au bruit de la lutte, le père Gobé s'était levé et, son jeune gars allumant une lanterne, tous deux sortirent, craignant un malheur.

Hélas! ils arrivèrent trop tard. A cent

mètres de la maison, au milieu du chemin, dans une mare de sang, gisait le pauvre Félix, le front fendu d'un coup de hachette. Quant aux assassins, ils avaient disparu.

Le lendemain matin, sur le lieu du crime, on ramassa un couteau à manche en buis, portant, suivant l'usage de l'époque, une initiale A.

Les soupçons s'égarèrent sur plusieurs; mais tant de prénoms commençaient par cette lettre! A défaut d'autres indices, comme l'on ne connaissait pas d'ennemis au jeune Gobé, l'enquête, menée mollement par le procureur, n'aboutit à aucun résultat.

Comment peindre la douleur de Jeanne Moisseron? Elle s'associa au deuil de la famille; muette et froide, elle accompagna au cimetière le corps de son fiancé, s'agenouilla près de la fosse ouverte et, étendant la main sur son cercueil, jura mentalement de le venger.

Cinq mois après ces événements, un beau matin, un inconnu insista pour lui remettre personnellement une lettre. Elle était d'André Gohin.

—Je viens, lui disait-il en substance, d'apprendre la mort de Félix Gobé et je vous demande la permission de m'associer à votre chagrin. Lui vivant, je ne vous aurais jamais reparlé de mon amour. Disparu pour toujours, me sera-t-il permis désormais d'espérer? Parlez, sur un simple mot de vous j'accourrai."

—A onze heures du soir, le 15 du mois prochain, je vous attendrai sur le pont de la douve du château, fut la réponse de Jeanne.

Fidèle au rendez-vous, au jour dit, la silhouette d'André Gohin se détachait nettement au clair de la lune, sur la lisière de la lande déserte, quand le dernier coup de onze heures tintait à l'horloge du vieux clocher de l'église.

Dès qu'il fut près de Jeanne:

—Comment assez vous remercier pour cette preuve de confiance? . . . Enfin, vous avez compris la sincérité de mon affection . . .

Couplant court à ce bel enthousiasme, elle lui dit froidement:

—Je voulais simplement vous rendre votre couteau . . .

—Quel couteau?

—Votre couteau ramassé près du cadavre de mon fiancé, par vous lâchement assassiné.

Littéralement ahuri par cette attaque imprévue, incapable de la moindre réflexion, sans trop se rendre compte de ses paroles, il répondit:

—Je vous jure que ce n'est pas moi qui l'ai tué.

—Soit; mais vous ne niez pas que vous *assistiez* ses assassins.

—C'est vrai, murmura-t-il en courbant la tête, et il ajouta d'un air suppliant: Je vous aime tant!

—Misérable lâche, s'écria Jeanne au comble de l'exaspération, tu paieras cher ton exécrable forfait.

Le portail de la cour, ouvert sans bruit, livra soudain passage à quatre vigoureux gaillards qui, pareils à des fauves, se ruèrent sur André Gohin et le terrassèrent. Désarmé, garrotté, incapable de nuire, il fut jeté comme un paquet de linge aux pieds de la jeune Moisseron.

—Prononce sur son sort, dit celui qui paraissait conduire les autres. Faut-il le lancer par dessus le pont dans la douve?

—Grâce! articulait le malheureux.

Sans prêter attention à ses supplications, Jeanne répondit:

—Non. Cluez cet oiseau de nuit, comme un hibou, à la grande porte du château.

Mis en croix, le supplicié poussait d'affreux hurlements.

—Achève l'œuvre, Michel Gobé, et venge ton frère, commanda durement la jeune fille.

Michel, soldat en congé, enrôlé dans la demi-brigade du général Scheffer, prit une hache et, d'un seul coup, fendit jusqu'au menton, la tête de l'intendant.

A cette époque tourmentée de notre histoire, la procédure était sommaire et peu compliquées ses formalités. Une rapide enquête ayant prouvé que André Gohin était allié aux bandes des chouans de Dubois-Guy, aucun des acteurs de ce drame ne fut inquiété.

Fidèle au souvenir de son fiancé, Jeanne Moisseron ne voulut jamais se marier. Dans les derniers temps de sa vie, elle s'était retirée à Saint-Hilaire, et habitait rue de la Motte, la maison qui forme l'angle de celle conduisant au pensionnat du Sacré-Cœur. Elle y est morte dans le courant de l'année 1841. Je l'ai connue dans ma prime jeunesse, et c'est de sa bouche que je tiens cette véridique histoire.



ETRE POÈTE

Par Georges Bouteilleau

ETRE poète, c'est aimer
L'idéal rayonnant des choses,
Le soleil, l'amour et les roses,
Tout ce qui naît pour embaumer.

Être poète, c'est comprendre
Ce que le cœur a d'infini;
Plaindre le pauvre et le banni,
Avoir la main prête à se tendre.

Être poète c'est souffrir
D'une espérance inassouvie;
C'est donner mille fois sa vie,
Et pourtant n'en jamais mourir.

BEST-SELLER CLIMAXES

Selected by Olga Womantle

SHE smiled the smile of untrammeled happiness. Their hungry glances met and devoured the yearning in each other's eyes. The past was behind them. No tortuous shadow lay between their souls. Tenderly, but with great strength, he gathered her into his arms.

He answered her with a long, delicious kiss. Her young, undulating body was close to his, rippling passionately under the thrill which his lips imparted.

Her face was warm and wet. He felt her quickened breathing upon him in the dark.

“Hugh!” She put all the pent-up longing of years into this name, which had never before passed her lips.

Tears were coursing down her cheeks. She turned and walked resolutely toward him. . . . The twilight faded and the shadows stole into the room. But even when the final blackness fell the two who sat together in each other's arms heeded it not at all. Around them shone the light that never was on land or sea.

Percival lifted his white and golden sweetheart and carried her to the orchard.

Paul drew her to him. Their lips melted and fused. Their beings were drowned, lost, submerged in each other's. The wide valley smiled up at them.

She clung to him hysterically, forgetting all. His arms fiercely crushed her closer—closer. Like a wanton she yielded her body to him.

Tenderly he brushed the black hair back from her white forehead and gently laid his lips upon it with that glad reverence with which a virgin might kiss a crucifix.

He opened his arms, and shyly she walked into them.

“I have loved you from the beginning of the world,” he told her. “Throughout the ages thou hast been my mate. Did you think to escape the irrevocable law?”

For answer she offered him her parted lips, and he fell upon them hungrily.

One tense, stifling moment . . . a fierce drumming of the heart—and they were in each other's arms. The lips of the maid turned to the lips of the man as might those of a desert wanderer to water after many hours of thirst. They clung to his, drank rapturous joy from them, became the gateway of pulse waves that deliriously flooded her being. Line to line her warm limbs and soft torso melted into the contour of his . . . A sense of floating in rarefied space intoxicated her brain.

A PRINCESS OF DREAMS

By George Jean Nathan

I DO not believe that it is well for a dramatic critic personally to know theatrical managers. I speak from experience. I am acquainted with two or three—and I know that this acquaintanceship has a plump tendency to influence my otherwise honest writings. I find that, knowing these gentlemen, coming into verbal contact with them, even now and again dropping the "mister" in intimate greeting of them, I cannot for the life o' me, try as I will, in my criticisms of their endeavors refrain from dealing with them much more unfavorably than were they strangers to me. It so occurs that several of the gentlemen under whose direction the new Princess Theater has been launched are on my free list. And I am going to take advantage of this fact to talk to them like a father.

For ten years, in all the numerous journals to which I have been a contributor, have I urged the institution of such a playhouse in America, a playhouse of a *Guignol-Antoine* blend devoted to the exploitation of thoroughbred brief drama. On the theory that a one-act play of the order of "The Twelve-Pound Look" was worth a dozen three-hour lugubriously thermal pasties of the order, say, of "The Spy" or "Bought and Paid For" or "The Governor's Lady," I hung expense and cabled this magazine in my last year's Paris chronicle as follows:

It has long been my dream that we might witness the inauguration of such a theater in America, wherein it might be given us to sit in attendance upon some of the truly compelling drama that is now refused us because certain authors' ideas "ain't long enough to make a full evening's entertainment," as the managerial wisdom hath it; because the vaudeville

halls will tolerate nothing more stimulating than putty noses, xylophone obligatos and jocose remarks on the bald-headedness of Sam the orchestra leader; and because on general principles it usually takes most of our theatrical purveyors six or seven years to arrive at the conclusion that there may be other authentic and intelligent dramatic novelties in the world besides a new scenic theory, a Wall Street play in which the hero's stock does not conveniently jump back to par again in the third act, and a chorus maneuver in which the last girl in the line to dance off the stage does not stick her right leg up in the face of the audience.

Which, at least, was agreeable to the cable company.

Here, at last, have we the playhouse, thanks to Mr. Brady, Mr. Shubert, Mr. Blinn and Mr. Selwyn! Here, at last, have we a theater that—I have the personal word of three of these good gentlemen for it—is to be devoted to "ideas." And here, at the top of the playbill of the theater, have we this courageously beautiful sentence: "The best obtainable dramatic material in shorter form will be selected without regard to its commercial value." And the "commercial" is printed in toothsome italics.

Ah, gentlemen, what a noble and august beginning! But will you live up to it? Of course, your new enterprise is such a very genuinely admirable thing that the itchy herd of nincompoops known as the public will probably stay away from it; but, if the herd does not remain away, will you still adhere to your vaunted policy? It is a curious paradox, you well know, gentlemen, that whenever the public accidentally patronizes a worthy theatrical institution, and subsequently through similar accident happens to enjoy itself, the theatrical manager in charge proceeds

immediately to give that public what the public wants—and spoils the whole thing.

The successful producer, on the other hand, is always either sufficiently shrewd or lucky to give the public what it doesn't want. *Vide: Mr. Belasco.* The whole unconfessed secret of Mr. Belasco's success rests in asserting in the newspapers (and believing) that the public wants thought in drama and then proceeding to give the public "*Peter Grimm*" and "*The Case of Becky*"; in asserting and believing that the public wants one thing and then (honestly enough, if unwittingly) giving it exactly the opposite thing. Hence, where a producer like Mr. Belasco achieves steady financial success, a producer like Mr. Joseph Gaites, who coincidentally gives the public exactly what it wants in the instance of such a sane and thoughtful little play as Fulda's "*Jugendfreunde*"—"*Our Wives*," as it was called in the adaptation—often achieves financial loss. (In the mind of the public, "thought" is chiefly synonymous with such things as hypnotism or spiritualism; it never has anything to do with the less vague elements in human endeavor, such, for instance, as the relations of men and women.)

Let us observe how far "ideas" have operated in the case of the first four plays submitted at the Princess. "*THE SWITCHBOARD*," by Edgar Wallace, might have been something worth while, but unfortunately is not. We see a telephone switchboard manned by an operator; we hear the voices of different persons as they current back and forth over the wires. The nether layer of an idea is here—but nothing more. What comes to our ears is dramaless, humorless, conventional and antique patter. The telephone is unquestionably one of the most vital, inevitable and dramatic elements in our modern civilization (which, of course, is why many dramatic critics object to its frequent employment on the stage); it is Life and Death, Cupid and Satan, Fortune and Ruin, Hope and Despair, Joy and Hate. Mr. Wallace has seen it only as an inanimate piece of mechan-

ism. By this token, Mr. Wallace should some day write very popular plays.

"*FEAR*," the play done at the Guignol under the title of "*La Grande Mort*," is precisely the thing for a theater like the Princess. Few more nervously thrilling spectacles, quivering to the bone with the bleeding entrails of character in the raw, have been shown on the small stages of Paris; few full-length plays disclosed in this country have contained more heated chills. Manufactured for the especial purpose of the thrill—as are most of the Guignol exhibits—this little piece, narrating the grim struggle of a coward against overpowering loneliness and the affright of the cholera plague in an English army encampment in sunblistered India, still contains much that is clear-headed, calmly impressive and unscented by the rougestick. The combination of genuine picturing of human character in a hell of torment and sheer theatricality is suavely accomplished. "*FANCY FREE*," by Stanley Houghton, third of the events, is a labored and rather melancholy attempt to achieve wit and satire by the ancient device of inverting the speeches of the play characters, that is, placing what would ordinarily be the woman's words in the man's mouth, and vice versa. There isn't an idea or a fresh slant of humor in Mr. Houghton's exhibit from first to last, although his intermittent gropings after what are imagined to be risqué lines have seemed to please almighty all who regarded his "*Hindle Wakes*" as great drama.

The closing play of the opening bill is "*ANY NIGHT*," originally done at the Lambs Club and from the hand of Edward Ellis. Vividly photographic save in two or three sentimentalizing details, the spectacle lies in the adventure of a street walker who lures a drunken man into a Raines Law hotel with the aid of the policeman who shares her spoils; of a fire that subsequently inflames the building; of the confrontation of the man, now come to his senses, by his own daughter who has been brought to the hotel by her young man and of their avoidance of the shame of discovery by seeking voluntary death in

the flames. The most objectionable and deplorable elements in the play are those very elements through the incorporation and exercise of which the author has sought to chasten its authentic, if unpleasant, countenance and to give it the "moral" touch—for instance, such a ridiculous sop as causing the gutter girl persistently to refuse to steal money or even accept it from the man when he is drunk—"I may be a street walker, but I ain't no crook!"—such nonsense as her plaintive self-defense because of her poor dear mother and poor sick little sisters back home; and such sterling pish-tush as the pseudo—"moral" and perfectly illogical ending. In its very grossness and absence of compromise must the strength and reason of such an exhibit lie. In spite of these deficiencies, however, the play is of a thousand times the value—artistic, economic and moral—of such pious twaddle as is breathed through the pages of Elizabeth Robins or the acts of "The Conspiracy." The acting is, in general, of a satisfactory quality; particularly in the cases of Holbrook Blinn and Mr. Ellis. And the staging of the plays is excellent. Here, then, is a life to the Princess Theater!

The play called "LIBERTY HALL," from the pen of that animated and persistently amiable ladyfinger, Mr. R. C. Carton, has been revived by Mr. Charles Frohman to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Empire Theater. "LIBERTY HALL," according to my learned colleagues, is supposed to show us how greatly the art of playwriting has changed since the play was first produced two decades ago. Unhappily, however, it shows us nothing of the kind. It is not a bit better than any one of ten or fifteen plays that have been produced during this or last year. To be sure, it is a much better play than "The Rainbow" or "The New Secretary" or "Peg o' My Heart" or any number of other recently presented plays of an analogously sweet brand; but, withal, it is still a very anæmic and spineless specimen.

The revival of the Carton play has proved a Roman holiday for all the boys

who are still given to speech over "the technique of the drama." We have heard from them much sapient palaver on the "more closely knit construction of the modern drama," on the "remarkable advancement in structural composition"—and on a lot more items. Of course drama has improved; of course we have eliminated "asides" and soliloquies and all that sort of thing; of course times change and we and our ideas change with them—but to attempt a comparison of the drama of twenty years ago with that of today by the standard of "LIBERTY HALL" carries the same proportion of sound sense as would be carried if, in 1933, some persons were to haul out "The Master Mind" as a criterion of the present period. And anyway, if the technique of playmaking were the final, definite and tabulated thing some souls would have us believe, George Bernard Shaw, Frank Wedekind, Eugene Brieux and any number of other promising youngsters who have laughed at this formidably named thing would still be writing the kind of technically admirable and correlatively jejune stuff beloved of Professors Scribe, Sardou and Dumas. Some day, when I give up the attempt to write dramatic criticism, I am going to devote myself to writing about dramatic technique.

Have you in your precipitate flight ever paused to consider the relative and intrinsic significance of the various diseases and physical catastrophes in connection with actors, actresses and theatrical managers? No? Well, then, let me take you by the hand. When a theatrical manager announces in the newspapers that a leading actress in one of his productions has fallen down and sprained her ankle, an accident that unfortunately will prevent the play from opening in New York on the night scheduled, it means that the play needs a new last act, a different actor cast for the role of the young lawyer, a new set for the second act and a lot more rehearsing. When a theatrical manager announces that a prima donna is suffering from a severe cold, it means that she has demanded more salary and fresh

wallpaper in her dressing room and that the manager is going to prove to her that her understudy can sing the role in a perfectly satisfactory manner. Prima donnas' colds, unlike human beings', incidentally, always get well the morning after the understudy has appeared. When a manager announces that the leading man is ill (the specific disease from which leading men suffer is never stated), it signifies that the leading man has looked upon the wine when it was decidedly red. And when a manager announces that the leading woman has been stricken suddenly with appendicitis, it means that there was only thirty dollars in the house the night before and that the play may as well be withdrawn. Two days after Frederic Arnold Kummer's play, "THE PAINTED WOMAN," opened at the Playhouse, Manager Brady announced that Miss Florence Reed had appendicitis.

Although long, long weeks ago this play was dispatched to the storing house, there would seem to be several elements that warrant a resurrection of the corpse at this late hour. For the past six months, our theatrical managers have been waving their verbs in the pages of the Sunday newspapers to the general effect that the romantic drama is due soon to reappear. Here is one of our managers' most promiscuous amusements. Every year they indulge themselves in gratuitous elocution conveying the idea that such and such a style of drama is now temporarily done for and that such and such another style of drama is bound soon again to come to the surface of popularity. In the dissemination of this fragrant buncombe, the managers are assisted in weeks when there is nothing worth while to write about by some of our celebrated theatrical commentators.

In other words, there is still left in our civilization a considerable quorum of stanch souls who gabble about "cycles," just as there is a copious group that still calls all harsh, grim plays like "Rutherford and Son" by the term "relentless" when, in reality, they are intrinsically and logically not a whit more relentless (or "ruthless," to quote a synonym fre-

quently used) than light, pleasant plays like "Our Wives" or "The Concert." Relentless means other things than last-act breaking-up of homes, suicides and the like. Love, consider, is as relentless, as ruthless, as hate. Habit is as relentless, as ruthless, as a steely selfishness. "The Incubus" is ten times as "relentless" and "ruthless" as "Rutherford"; and the former is light satirical comedy. The sun is a thousand times more relentless than the thunder of the storm. Only it doesn't seem to be. The only thoroughly relentless thing in the world of drama, as in the world of actual life, is the inconsistency of human nature. Whenever the critical confraternity perspires "relentless" panegyrics upon a play of the order of "Rutherford," you may be sure that, however excellent the rest of the play may be, it is defective in the blatant and uncompromising—and consequently unauthentic—consistency of its central figure's nature—or character, if you prefer the usual word. Write into your play a personage who scowls his way from the rise of the curtain to its final fall and who is compatibly unnatural—and a thousand typewriters will click to proclaim you a wonderful dramatist, where, as a matter of fact, you are nothing but a nature faker. There is no such personage. I except only hermits and the insane.

And this is why, in reviewing "Rutherford" from overseas before the American scrivening gentlemen became hysterical over its "ruthlessness," I made remark: "Its author's pen has skill—of that no doubt may exist; her eyes search aptly into the psychologic plexi of individuals as individuals, but they would seem to fail thus far to descry those plexi, those hearts, skid one against the other, save in the most patent sense. We find her a reporter of the individual, of the *one*. Your real dramatist is the reporter of the two—or three; of the meeting place rather than the Morris chair."

The really acute dramatist, a dramatist of the mark of Shaw in "Man and Superman," of Brieux from "Blanchette" to "Dupont," of Mirabeau in

"Business is Business," appreciates vividly that even the most relentless-natured of human beings, in contact with other human beings, never remains consistent to himself to the end of the chapter. He may remain consistent to his standards in thought and word, while refuting them with his actions—or vice versa. But wholly, entirely, finally consistent—never! You scream Ibsen, Strindberg and a blood brother or two in my ear, do you? But the "relentless" dramatic personages of Ibsen and Strindberg are intermittently less individuals than groupings individualized. They are—curse the word!—symbols; they are summaries; they are creeds, abstract and concrete, assembled under a man's or a woman's hat. Very plainly, any person proficient in humorless details and small dissensions may readily turn this argument into a fool's cap and stick it atop my head (such a person might argue, for instance, that such a character as John Rutherford might, too, be a summary in one body of several living characters—an argument which, being baseless, would unquestionably be regarded very seriously by the academically inclined); but, while I freely grant that the argument has its imposing flaws, I must also freely admit that it contains a certain basic tonic quality that is antidotal to much of the nonsense that is peddled on the question in general.

I find I have wandered far from home. I was in the process of chatting winsomely about dramatic "cycles" in relation to romantic drama when I so rudely interrupted myself. The theatrical manager or other person who talks "cycles" does so because he is in the custom of regarding the various types of plays not from the genuine viewpoint of thematic action, but from the traditional viewpoint of vocabulary, stage business, costumes and scenery. For example, in the metaphysics of the cycle babblers, a society play is a play in which the characters wear evening dress, lounge luxuriously on the gilt furniture, deport themselves with epigrammatic suavity and ring intermittently for Jenkins. For illustration, a military play is a play in

which all the men wear uniforms, in which a horse is heard periodically to gallop outside the house, and in which the current war seems to have been brought about through the circumstance that two men happen to be deadly rivals for the hand of the same girl. For instance, a romantic play is any play the scenes of which are laid in a period previous to 1870, in which complementally the costumes are not modern, in which one of the men characters, glimpsing the leading lady, exclaims: "By me faith, she is a likely wench!" and in which every character except the leading lady carries a horse pistol or a sword—the leading lady carrying a guitar. To be sure, there is another species of romantic play that the managers recognize. This second species is exactly like the first, except that all the characters are kings, queens, princesses, dukes, royal chamberlains, prime ministers and handsome lieutenants in the armies of the neighboring kingdoms.

Others before me have splintered lances in tilt with the cycle hallucination, but it flashes at me that they have missed the salient point of the contention. It is all very spectacular and co-ordinately ingénü to say that the public is always ready for a good play no matter how many plays like it have immediately preceded it; it is all very well and very easy to marshal statistics to prove that in some certain apparent "cycle" of farce, let us assume, a good melodrama, a good satirical play, a good comedy or a good anything else has been preëminently successful with the public. But it seems to me that the real feature here is this: What are believed by some to be cycles of public taste for certain different forms of theatrical entertainment are really nothing but cycles of lack of taste (or discernment) on the part of the theatrical producers.

The managers' minds move in cycles and, having no alternative, the public's taste must follow suit. Whatever intrinsically the public may want, the public, patently enough, cannot get it until the manager gives it to the public. In time, through some accident or other, the manager happens against his intui-

tion to produce the sort of play for which the public has had a hankering for a number of years, and then the manager and other obtuse souls forthwith announce triumphantly that the wheel of public taste has turned round again. Immediately, the manager figures out his *coup* in terms of externals. If the successful play contains a novel and vivid theme laid in Egypt, the manager forgets that the theme is almost wholly responsible for the good fortune with which his production has met and deduces the idea that a cycle of Egyptian drama (which to him means pyramids, the Sphinx by moonlight, palm trees and maybe a sandstorm) is upon the world. The subsequent substantial financial success of similarly scened, very bad plays disgorged by other producers, contrary to all that has been written on the subject, has nothing whatever to do with a "cycle." Had the first Egyptian drama and its numerous patterns been produced five years previously, the same "cycle" story would have extruded itself at that time. But, exclaim you—recalling what I said at the beginning of these reviews—public taste figures in the matter all the same! Certainly. But that taste does not move in cycles. It is always equally bad.

This is the time for a good romantic drama. Last year was the time for a good romantic drama. So was the year before that, the year before that, the years before that—and so will be next year. After one good romantic drama has been produced, the public will flock to a lot of very bad romantic dramas like "THE PAINTED WOMAN." Mr. Brady produced his bad romantic drama too soon—that was his only error in judgment. Mr. Brady's romantic drama cycle idea was all right so far as it went. He supplied the bygone period, the horse pistols, the swords, the by-me-faiths, the likely wench, the guitar and scenery that equalled the Belasco best, but he forgot all about a play. Hence, his brother managers, profiting by his failure, will naturally reassure themselves with all their pristine sageness that the public isn't ready yet for

romantic plays. The descriptive adjective "romantic" to these gentlemen describes periods rather than emotions. Romance, however, is neither scenery nor mantillas, neither moonlight nor orange-hued suns, neither broadswords nor sundials, neither lusty oaths nor clinking wassail bowls. Romance, in 1670 or 1913, lies in nothing else than the adventures of the emotions that are born of untrammeled spirits. To compose a romantic drama, a dramatist must do other things than write scenery and purple lighting effects. If he knows his trade, he will concern himself first and last with creating fresh drama; the romance will come of itself, gracefully, naturally, inevitably.

A play is largely to be judged by the absence of platitudinisms in its dialogue. Although Mr. Kummer's work did not contain all of the following choice bits, it unfortunately embraced a sufficient quantity to give it a most unholy and grievous air:

1. " * * * and then *you* came!"
2. "I was his plaything and he cast me aside."
3. "I saw things through the eyes of a child then, but I am a woman now."
4. "You will never, never understand."
5. "It is right you should know before you judge me."
6. "I understand, and I forgive you."
7. "You're so big and clean and strong!"
8. "I am not really a bad woman."
9. "Oh, God, what have I done that I should be made to suffer so?"
10. "It was *because* I love you that I did it."
11. " * * * I believed him."
12. "After that, I knew no more until—"
13. "It's different with a man."
14. "If only I could live my life over again!"
15. "I see it in your eyes, sweetheart, that you are telling the truth."
16. "I'll let nothing come between us—nothing!"
17. "I tell you she is a good woman; I have asked her to be my wife."
18. "Every fibre of my being cries out to you."
19. "I ask your forgiveness; I was not myself."
20. "If you had any respect for me you could not act as you do."
21. "You believe *that* of me?"
22. "What must you think of me?"
23. "When I make up my mind to do a thing I usually do it!"
24. "Come into my arms, dear—and forget."

A wealthy resident of New Jersey not long ago conceived the whim of inculcating the Italian male population of the town in which he lived with a somewhat holier idea of life than that with which they were amusing themselves. The Italians, laboring men, were in the habit of spending their nights in low beer saloons, emanating from the latter in the course of time each with his appropriate and peace-disturbing package. The benevolent soul rigged up a large clubroom, filled it with exciting games such as checkers, dominoes and the like, installed a large phonograph and bade the Italian laborers enter. Enter they did, and things promised to go along splendidly until the benevolent soul started the phonograph going with selected hymns. As the third disc began revolving out its sacred lyric, the Italian laborers rose to their feet as one man. "What's the matter?" asked the benevolent soul. To which the spokesman of the Italians replied: "Eef you wanna us to come here, you stoppa dat stuff and geev us *good* music!"

This is such a good story that I wish to employ it to illustrate some point about the Dickey-Goddard play, "THE GHOST BREAKER." Unfortunately, however, it hasn't anything to do with the play. You see, my method in such cases is always to write the story down first and then try to think up some point or other about the play I am reviewing that will make the quotation of the story seem perfectly natural, relevant and applicable. That is the way all dramatic critics go at it. The present case gives me some little trouble; but, notwithstanding this, I find that my long practice enables me adroitly to impress you that everything is legitimate by remarking that the first three of the four acts of this particular play are approximately as relevant to the play as my story is. What we have here is a laborious and amateurish endeavor to create an entertainment of conventional theatrical length out of a one-act vaudeville sketch. This latter is informed with a series of purely mechanical and unmental, but none the less effective,

thrills achieved through the exploits of a pert young American in a dimly lighted Seguran castle which is supposed to be haunted, but which, of course, finally discloses only the rascally Duke Carlos, cousin to the beautiful Princess Maria, making queer noises through his nose. The resident impression of the piece is of "The Return of Peter Grimm" revised by George Cohan for Douglas Fairbanks's use and acted for the amusement of the dramatic critic of the New York *Press*. Mr. H. B. Warner and Miss Katharine Emmet occupy the leading roles. I should like to say something about the acting, but unfortunately there is none.

"WIDOW BY PROXY," by Catherine C. Cushing. An obsolete and creaky farce affording Miss May Irwin an opportunity to engage in her familiar humors. Will be enjoyed principally and primarily by Catherine C. Cushing, May Irwin and all persons who roar over the species of jocoseness to be found in the short stories printed between dress patterns in women's magazines.

The second act of the John Philip Sousa-Leonard Liebling comic opera (see the program if you do not believe it is a comic opera) is laid in a glass works on Long Island. The period is 1898. Toward the end of the act, the laborers in the plant go on strike because the demands of their union have been refused. At this crisis, in dashes Colonel Vandever. "War has been declared with Spain!" he shouts. "Cease your squabbles, for there is only one Union now and that Union is the United States of America!!" Whereupon all the laborers, Irishmen, Italians, Swedes, Poles, Roumanians, Danes, Russian Jews and whatever other specimens would go to make up the working crew at a glass works, rush toward the footlights fired by patriotic zeal and raise their voices as follows:

From Maine to Oregon,
From ocean unto ocean,
Ready all, steady all,
Hear the nation's call to arms.
Oh, North and South and West, with patriot's
devotion,
Heeding come, speeding come,
From your cities, from your farms,

THE SMART SET

Hark, hark, hear the tramping of Uncle Sammy's martial band,
And soon they'll all be camping in Cuba's sanguinary land.

Of course, when the war with Spain broke out and President McKinley called for volunteers, what actually happened in all the glass works and other places was this:

From Maine to Oregon,
From ocean unto ocean,
Steady all, do not fall
For the nation's call to arms.
Oh, North and South and West, with patriot's devotion,
Had they jobs, kept their jobs,
In the cities, on the farms;
Tramps, bums and the jobless grabbed the chance to elude jail,
While the workers fought the battles with feet on the barroom rail.

Patriotism is a genuinely admirable and auspicious thing, but somehow these frequent theatrical apotheoses of the divine fire that is supposed to stir the pulse of every dago digging sewers in America for six dollars a week every time the Stars and Stripes is mentioned, give me a distinct feverish sensation in the region of the gastrohepatic omenta. Such obscene stage traffickings debase the true, quiet, decent, gentlemanly spirit of love of country that otherwise may be born or instilled and nurtured in the hearts of our polyglot peoples. Such displays are as noxious as they are baseless. The libretto of this tune show, from first to last, is in analogously poor taste. Neither wit nor originality operates in it in the slightest degree. A sample of the lyrics:

The epicure who loves to dine,
And revels in old China,
May think his Japanese is fine,
His Limoges plates much finer.

His Worcester ware may be most rare,
His Dresden quaint and thinner.
But what are such? They can not touch
The pail that holds the dinner.

Then tell the drummers rattle away,
And all the band fortissimo play,
From morn till night we'll shout "All hail,"
To the winsome, tinsome dinner pail.

I have no wish for soup or fish,
For terrapin or pheasant.
A hard-boiled egg or a turkey leg
To me is far more pleasant.

I love sardines, and pork and beans,
Likewise a cold potato;
But oh, my, my, the pumpkin pie,
There's really nothing greater.

You do not believe it possible? Well then, here is another. It is entitled "The American Girl":

The maid of old England is haughty,
And greets you with a "No, no, never."
Mamzelle of Paree thinks she's naughty,
But usually she is deuced clever.

The Fraulein from Berlin is clinging,
The blonde of the Swedes coldly grand,
But the ne-plus-ultra of the girls I know,
The three-ring circus and the all-day show,
Is the neat bit of, sweet bit of calico

That rules this mighty land,
This mighty land, that rules this land.

She's a honey girl,
When the summer sun shines all day.
She's a sunny girl,

When the budding buds bud in May.
Bewitching in her beauty rare,
With wondrous eyes and lovely hair,
And form and grace beyond compare,
She holds undaunted sway.

For gracious, goodness, bless my soul,
There's nothing like the girlies of the U. S. A.

I have quoted the two best specimens. Mr. Sousa, erstwhile beloved composer of ringing, striking melodies, has invested the exhibit with a series of exceedingly commonplace tunes.

The trouble with men who set out to write a political play that shall say something is that they give their leading political character a daughter or a wife and subsequently extract their political drama from the operations of the female upon the male political personage. Quite patently, what results is nothing more than a very old-fashioned parlor drama, which the author fondly imagines is a vigorous political play because he has called one character a District Attorney and another a Boss and has distributed a number of pungent passages anent "graft" and "the system" amongst the dialogue. A real political play will be written one of these days; but not until there comes a dramatist who can make himself realize—popular success or no popular success—that women can have no consequent position in a vivid picture of man's knuckle-cutting game of politics. "A MAN'S FRIENDS," by Ernest Poole, is ravaged by its women.

WEEP FOR THE WHITE SLAVE!

By H. L. Mencken

MORALITY, like culture, belongs to what the psychiatrists call the circular insanities, at least in these States. That is to say, it does not develop and unwind itself by a steady process, but by sudden, irregular pulsations, not unlike the outbreaks of a paranoiac. Just as every metaphysical bravo of the women's clubs has his day, William James succeeding Emerson and Nietzsche succeeding James and Bergson succeeding Nietzsche and Eucken succeeding Bergson—just so there is an endless succession of frenzies on the ethical side, each sounding the death knell of all that have gone before.

Two or three years ago, if I remember rightly, there was a general attack upon the racetrack, and all but a few of the States passed laws against it, thus diverting streams of grateful cash into the abstainers. At another time there was a grand assault upon the cigarette—an assault lasting a year or so, and then swiftly subsiding. And at yet other times, usually separated by brief intervals of rubbing-down and girding-up, there have been loud, sharp, preposterous campaigns against divorce, tights, the dime novel, "Three Weeks," moving pictures, vivisection, race suicide, Sarah Bernhardt, Mormonism, graft, alcohol, "Salome," raffles, cocaine, adultery, bribery, Ibsen, tobacco chewing, swearing, the higher criticism, Sunday baseball, bridge whist, cruelty to animals, the picture postcard, the bucket shop, kissing games, the sheath gown, the opium traffic, the "Decameron," the turkey trot, bachelors, polyandry, hugging, the army canteen, cannibalism, slavery, "La Dame aux Camélias" and the doctrine of natural selection.

If you want a complete list, with the exact dates of beginning and ending, apply to Anthony Comstock, who has been up to the hips in four-fifths of these jehads, and is still at it in full fuming and fury. Or to Dr. Charles Henry Parkhurst, or to the Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, founder, superintendent (and treasurer) of the International Reform Bureau, Inc., or to any other such plupious and assiduous rabble-rouser. All I want to do in this place is to direct your attention to the fact that the white slave trade is now taking its turn as the fashionable butt—that all the artillery which once tore holes through graft, race suicide, fleshings and the cigarette is now concentrated upon it—that all the virtuosi of virtue now hammer it and yammer at it.

In every large city of the country, even including such incurable Gomorrahs as Chicago, San Francisco and Washington, these specialists in sin have launched a vice crusade, broken into the complaisant newspapers, pilloried the police, scattered the ladies of scarlet, and set the old maids of both sexes by the ears. Hired whoopers travel from city to city, beating pulpits to pieces, inflaming the women's clubs, provoking the Baraca classes to orgiastic debauches of horror. Pamphlets describing the life of a white slave in thrilling detail are printed by the hundred thousand and distributed to Sunday school scholars. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and other such opulent Puritans pledge their lives, their tainted millions and their lachrymal ducts to the cause. Congress is browbeaten into passing a White Slave Act so donkeyishly stringent that it provides a penalty of three years in prison

for sending a starving cocotte home to her mother. The whole force of the federal Secret Service pursues a manicure girl who ventures upon a morganatic week end with the head barber. And the few sane men who have courage to protest—for example, Mayor Gaynor, of New York; Mayor Harrison, of Chicago; and Mr. Porter, director of public safety in Philadelphia—are denounced in terms so extravagant and ferocious that all lesser dissenters are scared into silence.

Such is the current crusade against the white slave trade—a fleet attack upon a rowboat, for the actual white slave is almost as rare as the blood-sweating behemoth of *Holy Writ*, and the so-called trade is no more an organized industry than jail breaking or simony. But if it thus lacks substance, it is nevertheless acquiring a literature, and that literature begins to show a considerable luxuriance of fancy. So far as I can make out, Reginald Wright Kauffman, the Philadelphia Socialist, was its Chaucer, its *stammvater*, at least in this unhappy land. His white slave novel, "The House of Bondage," fell upon the moralists like a ton of manna three years ago, and now they quote it gravely as a document in their cause, accepting its "facts" as the abolitionists once accepted the "facts" of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." A multitude of other fictioneers have since enlisted for the war, chiefly recruits from the mission tract factories. And now come two volunteers of wider and louder fame, if not actually of sounder—to wit, Elizabeth Robins, author of "The Fatal Gift of Beauty," "George Mandeville's Husband" (!) and various suffragette melodramas; and Charles Rann Kennedy, author of "The Servant in the House," "The Terrible Meek" and other such fantastic mixtures of "Ten Nights in a Barroom," the Chopin nocturnes and the Gospel according to St. Mark.

The Kennedy offering is a play in one act, as elaborately mystical as "The Servant in the House" and as pompously pointless as "The Terrible Meek." By name, "THE NECESSARY EVIL"

(*Harper*). John Heron, an unsuccessful musician, is discovered in converse with his daughter Nellie, an invalid for years, but now strangely recovered. It is Nellie's twenty-first birthday, and the two are waiting for their son and brother, Frank, who has long since escaped from home and is now at large in the sinful world. Old Heron, to while away the time, goes to the piano and plays Brahms's intermezzo, Op. 118, No. 6. The window is open. A girl of the streets, passing on her grim rounds, is halted and fascinated by the music. Presently she knocks at the door and is admitted. What does she want? To hear the music better? To share the Herons' tea and cake? Apparently not. Her one aim, so far as I can make out, is to explain to Nellie the technique of her parian and unappetizing profession.

Frank, naturally enough, is not hospitable to this learned lecture. His first impulse, once he has arrived on the scene, is to heave the visitor out. But he is restrained by his father, and so the business proceeds. The invader begins with the elements of embryology, leads up to a consideration of what the theologians used to call marital rights, and brings her harangue to a climax by describing the exact difference between a wife and a mistress. The effect is electrical, not to say miraculous. Nellie, on the verge of hysterics, pledges herself to the vice crusade; Frank is flabbergasted and brought to the mourner's bench, and old Heron, after delivering a mellow speech of his own, goes to the piano and resumes the Brahms intermezzo, Op. 118, No. 6. As for the stranger from Babylon, she makes her exit upon an unresolved seventh: "Think of me as something dead and buried. Perhaps risen again, or rising. . . . Who knows? Good-bye." Vague, misty, bubbly stuff. Full of harmonics, wolftones, the rustle of wings. It means something, you may be sure. It has symbols in it; even, perhaps, ideas. But just what those symbols and ideas are, I'm sure I can't tell you. The sole impression that I actually carry away from it—lowly earthworm, crass materialist that I am!—is one of windy, highfalutin bosh. I

have heard another virtuous cadenza—but the problem remains unsolved. If it is ever solved at all, I venture to believe, it will not be by matinee dramatists and prima donna preachers, but by earnest and unsentimental men, tolerant of human weakness, resigned to inevitable things, bent only upon unearthing the facts. The piping of such plattitudinarians as Mr. Kennedy, whatever their good intent, will help to that solution no more than music by Offenbach.

As for Miss Robins's novel, "My LITTLE SISTER" (*Dodd-Mead*), it is even worse, if only because it is better written, and hence more likely to convince and inflame the sentimental. In plot it clings closely to the standard model of white slave fiction. Two young English girls from the country, gently bred but very innocent, go up to London to visit an aunt they have never seen. They are met at the station by an old woman in widow's weeds, very imposing, very ingratiating. She taxicabs them to her "home," an ornate, rococo mansion with stained glass windows—and bars beyond! Strange beings float into their ken—a gorgeous blonde with lips so red that "they look bloody"; an obscene old colonel with little purple railroad tracks on his nose; a tall young man with a face as white as parchment; a huge, goatish fellow with a blue-black mustache, a round, bullet head, and "eyebrows nearly joined"—in brief, the ancient stock company of the stage bordel. For that is what "Aunt Josephine's" mansion really is, and "Aunt Josephine" herself is a vile impostor, a stealer of country girls, a broker in white slaves, a member of that vast trust which drags its nets from Vladivostock to Buenos Ayres, the authentic villainess of the present fashion.

One of the girls, Bettina by name, is charmed and unsuspicious. She likes the ardent love making of the pale young man; she joys in the colonel's dionysian toasts; she swallows the seductive champagne; she gulps down the doped coffee. But the other, whose name I forgot, has sudden doubts and

qualms. Why the bars in the windows? Why the silence of the servants, the strange tiptoeing, the red, red lips of the sinister blonde? One of the men, noting her alarm, takes pity on her and whispers an offer of help. He will show her the door—but she must be discreet, quick, stealthy! If the others detect him in his treachery, he will be butchered in cold blood. As he himself says, he is running "a ghastly risk." He bravely runs that risk and the wise sister duly escapes. Ten minutes' swift run by taxi and she is at the home of the real Aunt Josephine, battering at the door, crying for help, crazed by fears for Bettina.

Alas for poor Bettina! Aunt Josephine is a muddle-headed old New Thoughter, an adherent of mediums and swamis, a believer in the Ever-Creative Self, the Resilient Atom and other such mystical fowl. She is in conference at the moment with a male healer who is even more stupid than she is herself, and so it takes half an hour to make her understand what has happened. And then—thriceaccursed luck!—the escaped sister discovers that she doesn't know the address of the white slavers' stronghold! To the police! Foiled again! The police have a list of two or three hundred such dens. They promise to begin inquiries in the morning. And so the night passes and the day following, and many other days—days weary with vain searching, maddening false clues, bitter disappointments. In the end the right house is found—but Bettina is gone! Where is she? A slave in some hideous harem, or dead by her own hand? Is she still in London or has she been shipped to Paris, to Port Said, to Valparaiso, to Zanesville, O., to Chautauqua, N. Y.? No one ever knows. Bettina is never found.

Well, if it convinces you, I wish you joy, and promise to meet you in heaven; but as for me, I can't quite take it in. What was there to prevent Bettina heaving a bottle through the stained glass and yelling for the police? What was the man who helped her sister afraid of? Why didn't the sister stop and appeal to the first man she met on the

street, even to the driver of the taxicab? If the police hemmed and hawed, why didn't she or Aunt Josephine or one of the aides they enlisted go bawling "to the *Daily Mail* office? Moreover, why should anyone go to the trouble and risk of kidnapping two such intelligent, well educated girls, certain to resist to the death and with influential friends to raise a hue and cry, when willing candidates for the hulks of sin are so numerous, so persistent, even so beseeching? Why all that dangerous melodrama when three blasts of a whistle in any department store or chorus room would have brought a dozen eager volunteers? Why all the needless expense of that gorgeous plant, that upholstered bastile, that paradisiacal hell? Why the huge waste of money upon scouts, guards, toxicologists, sluggers, grafters, modistes, beauty doctors, first and second scoundrels?

You won't have to go far, of course, for answers to these questions. The vice crusaders will point out hundreds of men who have been sent to prison for debauching and trading in women. They will prove to you—and you know it already—that hundreds of girls disappear every year. But they will have difficulty, I think, in producing one girl of Bettina's station who has been actually sold into white slavery. They will have difficulty in separating prostitution, even in a single case, from poverty, ignorance and degradation, its old handmaidens. Do I say difficulty? Alack, I forget the "evidence" of the book I am now reviewing! Six months hence that book will be solemnly quoted as an authority, just as Mr. Kauffman's book is quoted today. Ballyho preachers will use it as a text; pious wiskinskis will collect war funds on the strength of it; Bettina what's-her-name will become as real and poignant a martyr as Uncle Tom; whole chapters from her history will be read into the *Congressional Record*, laws will be passed making it a felony to speak to a strange girl at a railway station; the age of consent will be raised to twenty-five years, to thirty-five, to forty-five; the Bettina case will take rank in moral jurisprudence with the Breckinridge

case and the Dred Scott decision. Such is the logical method of the heart-wringers and eye-poppers of virtue! Such is the moral dialectic! Such is the genesis of pious frenzies in these, our sentimental States!

Enough of balderdash! Let us turn to Harry Leon Wilson's "BUNKER BEAN" (*Doubleday-Page*) and clear our minds with its hearty, healthy laughs. Here we have a comic romance, a species of fiction rare among us, and what is more, a comic romance so well planned and so well executed that it keeps up its speed and its flavor to the very last page. Bunker Bean himself is a fellow who drips with absurdity—an "advanced dresser" without the courage to risk the ultimate checks and stripes; an assiduous patron and victim of seers and necromancers; stenographer to old Jim Breede the millionaire, and bitter critic of old Jim's detachable cuffs; connoisseur of neckties and unwilling prey of the Life Force; reincarnation of Egyptian kings and flea in the ear of the mighty Federal Express Company. And around him revolve personages just as incredible and just as diverting—old Breede himself, with his countless millions and his climbing collars; Grandma Breede, romantic eugenist and militant suffragette; young Miss Flapper Breede, pursuer of shy Bunker; Countess Casanova and Professor Balthasar, penetrators of the mists of time; old Metzeger, the bookkeeper, with his fantastic passion for odd fractions; Bulger, of the office, with his dark amours and his baroque slang. You will take joy in these queer fowl, I am sure, and you will take more joy in poor Bunker's astounding adventures in love, high finance and derring-do. The tale is pure farce: scarcely a probability corrupts its hilarious flow of grotesqueries. But in that uproarious piling up of absurdity upon absurdity there is visible a constant and abounding skill. In brief, Mr. Wilson knows how to write—as he showed in "The Spenders" a dozen years ago—and at no time has he given better evidence of it than in this delightful piece of foolery.

More light and agreeable stuff is to be

found in "THE RED HAND OF ULSTER," by G. A. Birmingham (*Doran*), the chronicle of a low comedy revolt against Home Rule in the North of Ireland, financed by an Irish-American millionaire and abounding in excellent burlesque; and still more in "THE SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE," by Earl Derr Biggers (*Bobbs-Merrill*), the story of an exhausted novelist's flight for quiet to an empty mountain hotel, and of the strange, six-barreled melodrama he there blunders upon. Mr. Birmingham is a veteran of the book counters, but Mr. Biggers is a newcomer, and, it must be added, a very welcome one. He has an eye for oddity of character, he writes natural dialogue, his invention is unflagging, and he has something of that skill at combining the dramatic and the ludicrous which distinguishes Mary Roberts Rinehart. Mrs. Rinehart, incidentally, is in the ring with a new book of her own. It is called "THE CASE OF JENNIE BRICE" (*Bobbs-Merrill*), and it leans toward seriousness rather more than most of her work. The press agent of a Pittsburgh stock company, eager to aid a flagging prosperity, has one of his actresses disappear under circumstances which suggest murder and arranges to throw suspicion on her husband. The husband, an unsuccessful playwright, is to get fifty dollars a day while he sits in jail. After the sensation has died down, a new one is to be sprung by producing the murdered woman, alive and well. Unluckily, the needy husband takes the thing a bit too seriously. That is to say, he actually murders his wife, heaving her body into the swollen Ohio river. The result is that the press agent is in a sore predicament when the time comes to produce her. Like every other tale from Mrs. Rinehart's busy workshop, this one is deftly planned and well written. The characters all have life in them; the background is sketched in vividly; the suspense of the reader is maintained to the very end.

Another excellent detective story is "THE SHADOW," by Arthur Stringer (*Century Co.*), the chronicle of a determined sleuth's wolflike pursuit of a bank burglar, a chase carrying the two

of them all around the world and into many strange scenes and tight places. Here, indeed, the usual machinery of the detective story is wholly abandoned, and we have what is better: a penetrating and pitiless character study of a very real detective. This Jim Blake is no supernatural Sherlock Holmes, smelling cigar ashes, analyzing blood stains, performing prodigies of deduction. On the contrary, he is merely an extraordinarily pertinacious and bloodthirsty cop—a fellow but one degree removed from the crook he is after. It is not logic that keeps him to the trail, nor even a sharp wit, but merely an infinite patience, a bulldog courage, an illimitable acquaintance among thieves and their friends, a fellow craftsman's talent for getting their confidence. After a while, the capture of his quarry becomes a monomania with him. He sacrifices everything to it, including even his job. And when, in the end, he succeeds in his grim endeavor, it is a victory that leaves him done for. It is in this last episode that Mr. Stringer spoils his story. Somehow, his picture of the great detective standing at the one street corner for years, fatiguingly selling glue to passers-by, until at last his wily antagonist walks into his clutches—somehow this picture takes away the reality of the man. The device itself is possible, but is it possible that the great Jim Blake could be so quickly forgotten? Is it possible that his astounding vigil should so long escape the notice of the Sunday editors? I doubt it. But meanwhile I bear testimony that "THE SHADOW" is a brisk and fascinating story—down to page 288.

The genial E. Phillips Oppenheim with his inevitable spring novel—this time of peril, passion and international intrigue, by name "THE MISCHIEF MAKER" (*Little-Brown*). I leave it to your enchanted inspection and pass on to the first fruits of a new Oppenheim, plus touches of Rex Beach, Harold MacGrath, Richard Harding Davis, Ouida, Sylvanus Cobb and the more startling of the two Robert Hichenses. This débutante is George K. Stiles, and his book is "THE DRAGOMAN" (*Harper*),

a rip-snorting tale of rapture, rough-house and rebellion in modern Egypt. John Harrison Randall, an Englishman, despite his American name, is the central figure. He is a native of the Nile valley, and he knows the Egyptians so well that he can put on a dirty burnouse and pass for one of them. When he sees a ship laden with arms start up the Nile—stupidly passed by guileless officials—and hears that the arms are for a native rebellion against English rule, he boards the ship disguised as the Mullah or Konia, murders the real Mullah to avoid detection, and thereafter enjoys adventures so numerous and so staggering that even the hardened best-seller *fresser* must standaghast. Incidentally, he falls in love with the beautiful Elizabeth Hilken, daughter to the gun-runner, and rescues her from the foul clutches of Zanda Pasha, chief Machiavelli of the rebels. Abyssinians, treachery and the bubonic plague help the action along. It begins *allegro* and ends *prestissimo*, with the lid up and a sashweight strapped to the loud pedal. This Mr. Stiles, it is plain, has a genuine talent for such gaudy confections. He writes at times with his tongue in his cheek, but he raises the goose pimples nevertheless. Let the old-established family practitioners look well to their laurels.

"THE HAPPY WARRIOR," by A. S. M. Hutchinson (*Little-Brown*)—a smooth flowing, good-humored, entertaining romance in the manner of "The Broad Highway." "THE NIGHT BORN," by Jack London (*Century Co.*)—a volume of ten short stories, including five in Mr. London's best manner. "ON BOARD THE BEATIC," by Anna Chapin Ray (*Little-Brown*)—a harmless tale of love deferred. "WITCHING HILL," by E. W. Hornung (*Scribner*)—eight brisk stories of a London suburb, with spookish overtones. "PIPPIN," by Evelyn Van Buren (*Century Co.*)—a combination of fairy tale and romantic comedy. "ANDREW THE GLAD," by Maria Thompson Daviess (*Bobbs-Merrill*)—sweet, sweet stuff!

"A SONG OF SIXPENCE," by Frederic Arnold Kummer (*Watts*)—an acute and thoughtful study of a woman climber. All that Emmy Moran has in her stock when she faces the world, fatherless at twenty, is a good figure, a pair of amorous gray-green eyes and a crown of red-brown hair. But with this equipment she sets out to conquer—and conquer she does. When love peeps in at the door, she chases it away. Grant Chandler is a fine fellow, and some day, perhaps, he will be rich and famous, but Emmy is taking no risks. Tyler Ransome is a better bet. He is middle-aged, paunchy and commonplace, but he has the money. So Emmy becomes Mrs. Ransome, and presently the widowed Mrs. Ransome, and soon after that the Hon. Mrs. Alfred Charles Allington, and finally the Countess of Wroxeter. A dizzy flight from Gainesville, O., and the adoration of hardware clerks! A long, long flight, but is it really upward? Is it to happiness? Is it even to contentment? Alas, Emmy finds, in the end, that it is not. She is a rich woman and she is a peeress of England, but all around her is a vast emptiness, a great desolation of soul. Like Carrie Meeber, she stands looking out of the window upon a bleak and gray old world. The little joys of life, the simple kindnesses, the precious caresses of love and service—all these have passed her by. She is a lonely, loveless, hopeless woman, her youth gone, her golden apples turned to bitter ashes.

Mr. Kummer is a fictioneer of whom it will be well to take serious account. He diverts himself, in the main, with light pieces, but now and then he tries a story in the grand manner, and usually he gives a very good account of himself. He thinks things out in a vigorous, unemotional way; he has a sharp eye for the little differences that give color to character; he manages his situations admirably; he is a student of good models and he does them no dishonor. Not many of our younger scriveners, indeed, show the half of his promise.



SOMETHING PERSONAL

By the Editor

Our Curtain Raiser

IN the present issue of THE SMART SET it will be noticed that for the first time in its history we have changed the place of the novelette. The reason for this is a simple one: in each issue we wish to feature some important and arresting piece of work by placing it first in the magazine. This month we have placed what we think a very remarkable short story—"Daughters of Joy"—at the beginning of the magazine. In future issues it may be a one-act play, or a poem, or a satire—or perhaps the novelette. Our purpose is to put in a place of prominence some striking and unusual contribution so that it will not be overlooked. In the flux and reflux of conditions and events certain issues of a magazine are bound to be better than others, but no issue of a magazine need be entirely devoid of material of the highest class. And lest in some unlucky month we are compelled to go to press with a few stories which do not represent exactly our idea of what we consider the best, we are making sure that at least one unusual contribution is not lost in the routine make-up.

Sex Stories

In view of the general awakening to a clean and frank discussion of sex subjects, readers are naturally interested in the attitude of their magazines toward such a matter. Here then is our creed:

We believe that the only warrant for publishing stories of sex is that they be clean and true to life. A pernicious form of sex story has grown up in some of the cheaper magazines, stemming from the salacious *double entente* of a certain

class of French fiction. These stories have evolved into a most indecent and despicable literary type, viz.: the story which flirts superficially with sex, skimming over the thin ice of suggestiveness and ending with an obviously false moral as a means of excusing the story's indecency. Although chemically pure, such stories represent the worst form of hypocrisy. If a sex story is worth telling, it should present the facts truthfully and employ the language which the telling demands. Sex in itself is not indecent. It is the innuendoes that make it so.

The New-Old Cover

Readers of this issue of THE SMART SET will notice that we have gone back to the old cover. The reason for this change was a psychological one. It was not because we were seduced by any beauty in the old cover; nor yet because we thought it had a commercial value greater than our recent covers. But so long has there been an impression in certain quarters that THE SMART SET was filled with superficial society stories and catered to the whims of the social smart set, that we felt something had to be done to dissipate the notion. In changing our cover from month to month, we have assumed unwittingly in the eyes of our readers a certain transitory aspect which in reality we do not possess. Therefore, by returning to the original cover, we eliminate at once the impression of following the current modes. Inasmuch as the appeal of our reading matter is not a "popular" or transient one, we were really belying ourselves by a symbol of transiency on our cover.

Furthermore, the fact that we are going to abide by it is really no more than a token that we have solidified our reading matter and put it on a permanent literary basis. We are not going to "popularize" our fiction, and it is inconsistent that we should attempt to popularize our cover. After all, the old SMART SET cover was associated with a very definite ideal—an ideal which, in spite of the many sins committed in its name, was a vital and important one in American publishing.

Smart Set Humor

Humor in America is in a bad way. The highest type of humor—satire—is almost unknown as a native production. During the past years our best satire has been imported. Puritanism and conventionalism have limited our jesters thematically, and our funny men find their best jokes unsalable. The average American is unable to laugh at himself; he is unable to appreciate sarcasm and cynicism if the ridicule touches any of his pet beliefs. Consequently our epigrams are for the most part garbled platitudes, our repartee depends largely upon a sense of the absurd, and our most widely read jokes are elaborated puns. Our humor is largely the inane humor of children—suave, delicate quirks which rarely have an idea behind them. The primitive mind resents philosophic cynicism; the best of Mark Twain's stories have never been printed.

But here again THE SMART SET proposes to make its appeal, not to the uncivilized reader, but to the man and woman broad enough to smile at themselves, to accept the cynical and the satirical as the means and not the ends of humor.

Owen Hatteras

Our first definite step in producing virile humor is the installation of a new department, "Pertinent and Impertinent," which began in the April number.

Mr. Hatteras, we believe, has struck an entirely new note in American humor. His humor demands a considerable amount of intellectual culture—not for the mere understanding of it, but for its acceptance. Beneath his humor there is a positive, philosophic idea. Nothing of the kind has ever before been attempted in this country, although in Europe this form of humor is not unknown. At times "Pertinent and Impertinent" is pure satire, at others broad burlesque. It is tinged occasionally with cynicism, but its chief appeal is to those people capable of assimilating new points of view.

Mr. Hatteras is a comparatively young man, but has been writing for the past ten or twelve years, although until THE SMART SET contracted for his exclusive work he had difficulty in gaining entrance into the magazines or newspapers.

The reason for this is obvious: His humor being in the form of an innovation, the average editor has fought shy of him, going on the theory that "old things are best." The American public does not take kindly to satire and so the American editor, reflecting the tastes of the American public, does not take kindly to Mr. Hatteras. But we see in this author the making of a significant figure in American letters, and it is the intention of this magazine to give him from three to four pages every month for a free expression of his satirical humor, for we believe THE SMART SET readers are ready for him.

The work of Mr. Hatteras will appear in no other periodical.





The Power of Silent Service

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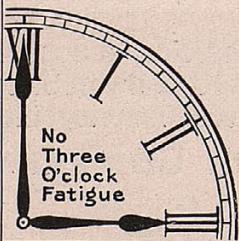


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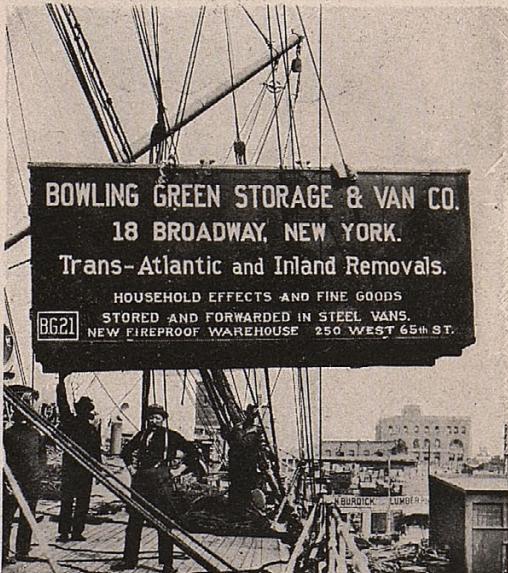
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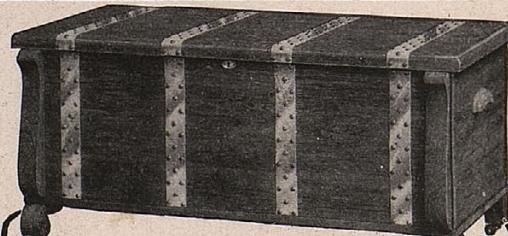


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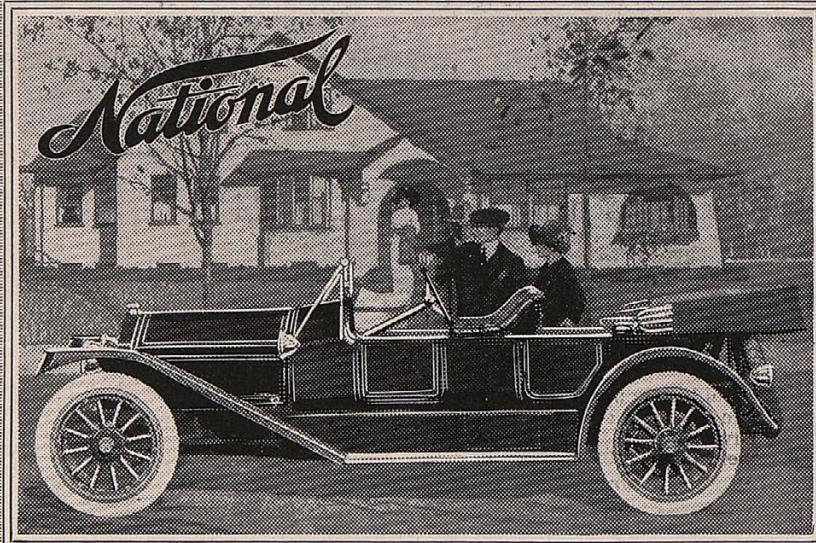
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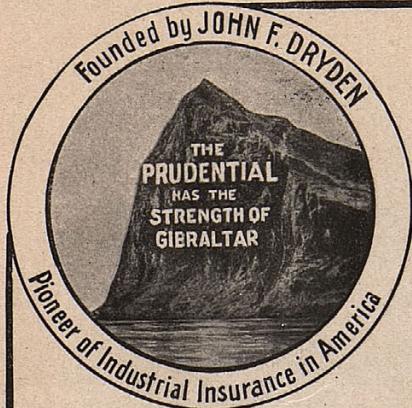
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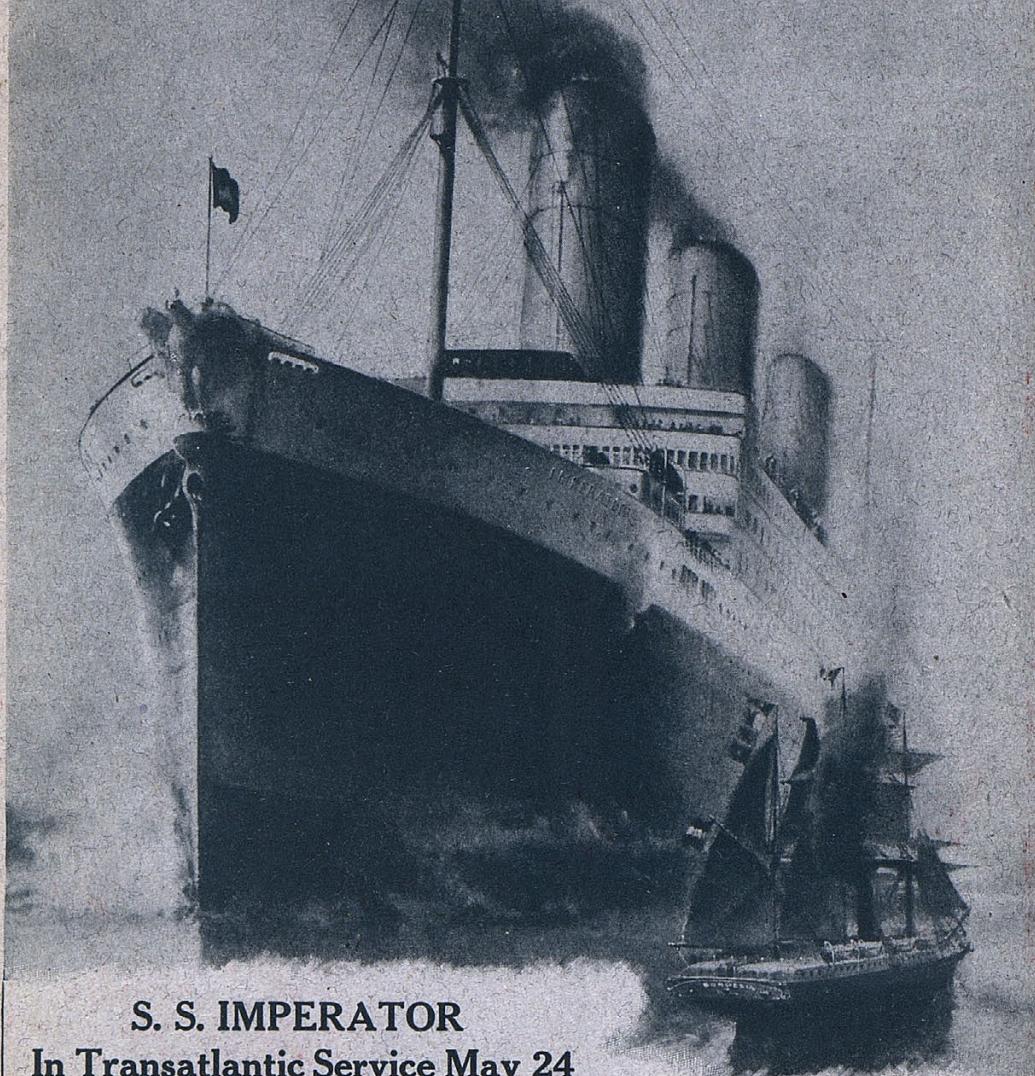
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